



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

A LITTLE
CAPTIVE
LED



BEULAH
MARIE
DIX

AL1164.2..20



Harvard College Library

FROM

Walter B. Briggs

.....

.....

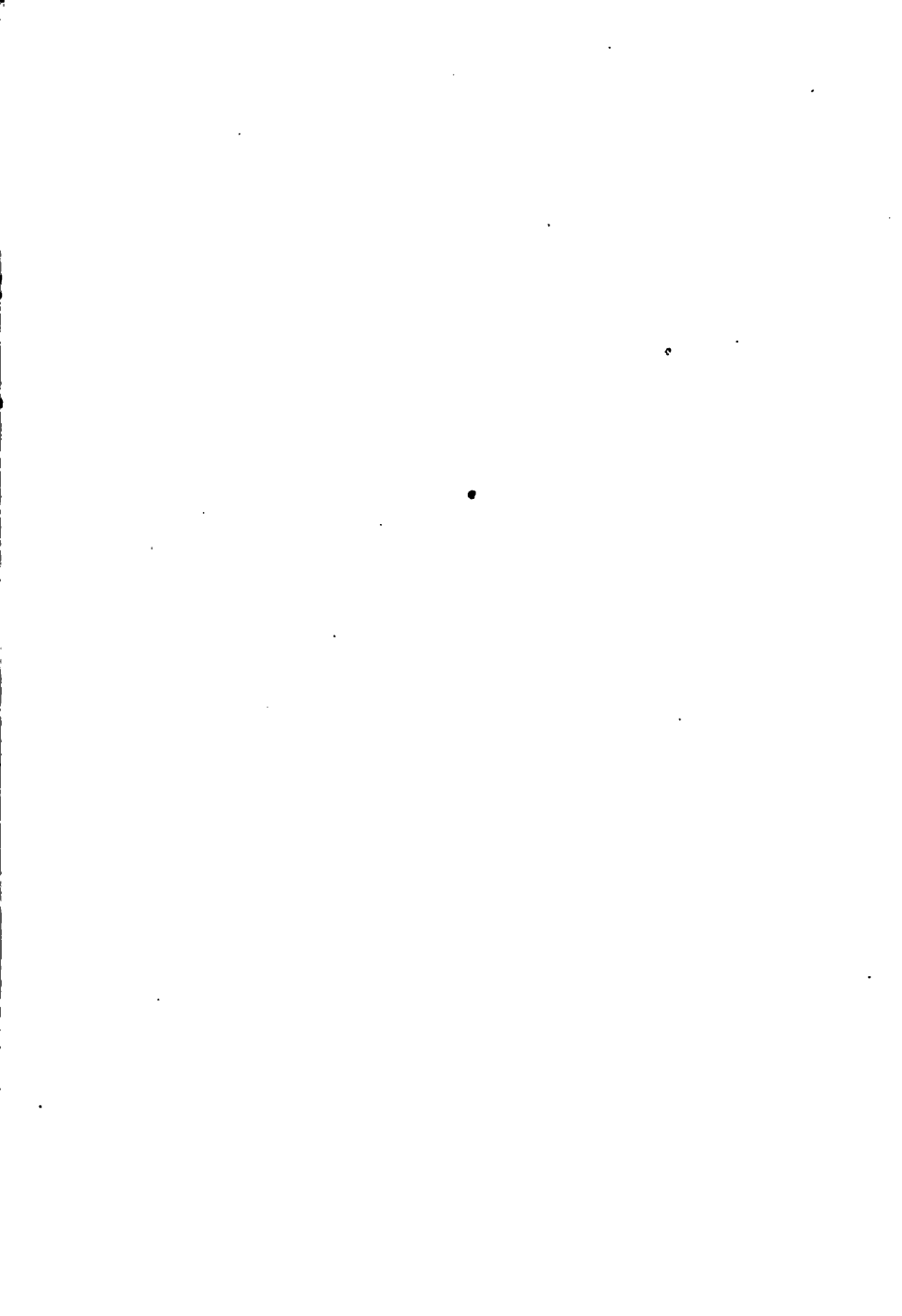
.....



ced -
~~ced~~
se mt

A LITTLE CAPTIVE LAD

•The  Co. •





“‘Touch that boy again, and, law or no law, I’ll send you whining with a bloody coxcomb.’”

A LITTLE CAPTIVE LAD

BY

BEULAH MARIE DIX

AUTHOR OF "HUGH GWYETH," "SOLDIER BIGDALE," "THE MAKING
OF CHRISTOPHER FERRINGHAM," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY WILL GREFFÉ

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.

1902

All rights reserved

AL1164.2.20

✓



Walter B. Briggs

COPYRIGHT, 1902,
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and electrotyped October, 1902.

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing & Co. — Berwick & Smith
Norwood Mass. U. S. A.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. WHEN ENGLISHMAN MET ENGLISHMAN	1
II. COMRADES IN EXILE	7
III. THE COMING OF COLONEL PAULET	18
IV. THE HAND OF AUTHORITY	28
V. AFTER THE ROAST GOOSE	38
VI. "YOUR BROTHER HENRY"	44
VII. THE BONE OF CONTENTION	55
VIII. IN THE HANDS OF PHILISTINES	65
IX. THE PATH OF BANISHMENT	74
X. THE MARTYRDOM OF A CAVALIER	82
XI. IN THE HOME OF HIS FATHERS	94
XII. THE TYRANNY OF MR. DARRELL	103
XIII. A STROKE FOR FREEDOM	114
XIV. THE SOLDIER OF THE PARLIAMENT	125
XV. OUT OF BOUNDS	135
XVI. AFTERWARD	144
XVII. THE FUGITIVE	155
XVIII. AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PIT	166
XIX. A STORY IN THE TWILIGHT	175
XX. RUMORS OF WAR	190
XXI. FROM SPORT TO EARNEST	202
XXII. "IN THE COLD AND HEAVY RAIN"	215

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXIII. A TRAITOR TO THE PARLIAMENT	227
XXIV. THE CREED OF CAPTAIN CARELESS	239
XXV. THE BROTHERS	248
XXVI. ON TRIAL	257
XXVII. FOR THE LAD'S SAKE	268
XXVIII. TWO MEN AND A BOY	276

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
" 'Touch that boy again, and, law or no law, I'll send you whining with a bloody coxcomb ! ' "	6
" Gervase's face went white and his teeth chattered. ' You — you — ' he gasped "	52
" " That's <i>When the King Enjoys his Own Again</i> , ' he cried. ' That's a Cavalier song ' "	99
" ' I will write my letter now, Mr. Darrell, ' he announced " . . .	114
" He came face to face with a lean, sunburnt man in a faded green jerkin "	142
" Next moment he felt a man's arm about him "	173
" The next moment Gallant stood quivering, with Jack Careless gripping to the bridle "	223
" Leaning against the door-jamb, mired, unkempt, white-faced, stood Jack Careless "	267



A LITTLE CAPTIVE LAD

CHAPTER I

WHEN ENGLISHMAN MET ENGLISHMAN

"**TRAITORS! Ay-y-y! Jostle 'em! Cromwell's dogs! King-murderers! Murderers!**"

The staid old Hoog Straet had never echoed with a madder clamor. Shopmen clapped to their shutters, women scudded into their houses, boys in wooden shoes ran clattering across the brick walks. The glass windows, bright as crystal, high up in the gay brick houses, showed each its bunch of faces. Ruddy matrons in white caps, round-faced children, wrinkled grandmothers, all peered forth into the street.

Down below on the clean-scoured walk the sober Dutch burghers who were lumbering about their business drew back and gaped.

A little tailor poked his bald head out at the hatch of his shop. "Ei, ei! What's to do, Mynheer van Zandt?" he cried.

Mynheer took his great porcelain pipe from

between his lips. "Those English!" He dropped the words slowly. "Those crazy Englishmen!"

Up the broad street that leads from the Spuy, where the Rotterdam boats lie to, a steady procession was coming. More than two hundred men were in line,—square-jawed, broad-shouldered, fair-skinned Englishmen. The most of them wore their hair cut round below their ears, and they were soberly clad, though there were among them all degrees of garments, from the fustian jacket of the lackey to the velvet doublet of the gentleman.

Masters and men, they stood close together, six abreast, with small space between their ranks. Some, affecting unconcern, feigned to speak with their neighbors; some folded their cloaks the more closely about their shoulders and looked indifferently before them; but many others of the younger sort clapped their hands to their swords and glowered upon the mob that jeered them.

These were English, too, but of a different stamp. The men who cried out upon that staid procession wore their hair long, and their clothes were of gay hues, though sadly stained and rumpled. There were velvet coat sleeves in that mob that did not hide bare elbows, and there were fine leather boots the soles of which were gaping from the uppers.

There were hungry faces, too, under the long locks, and in more than one pair of satin breeches there were empty pockets.

Not a man in the throng offered to draw a sword or even to strike a blow, for the laws of the States of Holland dealt mercilessly with brawlers; but they threw a hatred from their very hearts into their cry, "Judases! Hangmen! Plunderers!"

For the Englishmen who marched so steadily up the Hoog Straet were Roundheads, ambassadors that the English Parliament, the Parliament that slew King Charles, was sending to treat with the States General of Holland. And the Englishmen who cursed them and taunted them were Cavaliers, old followers of the king, whom the same Parliament that sent forth these ambassadors had stripped of their possessions in England and exiled to the Continent.

Opposite Mynheer van Zandt's bookstall, where the crowd swarmed thickest, a boy was jostling in the press,—a slender little fellow, with a mop of dark hair that would have been the better for brushing, and dark eyes that were big and bright in his pale face. He was clad in a shabby, outgrown suit of crimson satin, and his head was bare. Tall men pushed and shoved and almost trod on

him, but he gave no heed. He liked it all — the tumult in the street, the crowding of the men about him, the confusion and the outcries. He, too, was bearing his part in the din, quite like a man. He dodged under his neighbor's elbow and thrust himself to the edge of the crowd, where he could see the big, evil Roundheads swinging past him, right within touching distance.

“Robbers!” he piped in their faces.

He thrilled with the sense of his own gallantry, but all the time he held his body alert for a backward spring, should one of these ruffians wheel upon him. People whose trade was butchering kings would make nothing of wringing a small boy's neck, he reasoned, only he did not fear anything so definite as having his neck wrung. The very vagueness of what these men might do to him, if they could, made his eyes big with wonder.

It was just at that moment that a hot Cavalier, noisy in hurling his own choice insults, and heedless of his neighbors, elbowed a way through the crowd. The movement which he thus sent swaying through the press jostled before it the shabby little figure in crimson. Still open-mouthed in his gibes, the boy was flung forward helplessly, — in-

deed, would have fallen headlong, had not one of the ambassadors' followers caught him.

But a hard fall would have frightened the lad far less than the sudden grasp of his enemy upon his shoulder. To his thinking, his last moment had come. The shouts of his Cavalier friends seemed to grow fainter. He was alone in the clutches of the adversary. He saw the strange face above him,—the face of a clean-shaven, blue-eyed man with a firm-set mouth; he noted even the spotless white of his captor's linen collar.

Then the first second of breathless terror passed, and the boy had his voice again. "You rogue!" he quavered, and kicked frantically at the man's shins. "Le' go my arm, rogue!"

The Roundhead had not even time to obey that rude bidding, when a man came smashing through the ranks of the Cavaliers. He was a young man and tall; his face was hot and his gray eyes afire, and he knocked aside friend and foe regardlessly. All in one blast he swept into the very ranks of the Parliament men and caught the boy to his side.

"Body o' me!" he shouted. "Isn't it enough that ye've beggared us of lands and goods and 'tainted us for traitors and hounded us out of

the kingdom, but now you must clap your foul hands on our very babes? Touch that boy again, and, law or no law, I'll send you whining with a bloody coxcomb!"

"Ay-y-y! To him, Jack Careless!" bayed one in the crowd, and others caught up the word, "Down with him! Ay, down with him!"

But the clean-shaven man, with never a muscle of his face changing, eyed the young Cavalier up and down. "Spare your voice, my friend," he advised coldly. "Save it to teach your little brother better manners—if you are capable of giving him such instruction." He stepped back into the ranks, and, face to the front, walked on deliberately.

The boy, the cause of the disturbance, started boldly two paces from his champion's side, though he still clung to his hand. "You knave!" he shrilled after the Roundhead.

CHAPTER II

COMRADES IN EXILE

UP beyond the Plaats the harassed ambassadors at last found shelter in their lodgings. For a time the noisy Cavalier troop shouted round their doorways. Some threw stones, and whenever a shiny window in the house-front was smashed and the glass fell tinkling to the walk below, a yell went up from the crowd. Some hustled the servants of the ambassadors who came out upon their masters' business, but chances for such violence were few; it was only a very bold Roundhead who would venture to show his face that day in the streets of the Hague.

The sport of smashing windows and yelling with throats that were already hoarse soon grew tame. Man by man and group by group the Royalists drew off and slouched away. Among the rest the long-legged young man with gray eyes whom they called Jack Careless disentangled himself from

the crowd, and, after whooping a last defiance at the blank front of the ambassadors' quarters, turned his back upon them.

Around him swarmed men of his own party, but he walked away alone. Of all that shabby company he was perhaps the shabbiest. His coat and breeches, once of good green cloth, were threadbare and shiny, and his shirt was crumpled and patched, and his felt hat was well-nigh shapeless. In the last months he had suffered more than one rebuff from his better-fortuned comrades. So, without even a glance, he walked by them now, with his head held as stiffly erect as if it were he who had cast them off.

But Careless's face softened when he reached the nearest doorway, where on the threshold the little boy in crimson sat resting. "Come, Gervase," he said, and held out his hand. "We'll go home."

Side by side the man and the boy went slowly down the street. Once and again the lad glanced over his shoulder toward the ambassadors' quarters, and at last he looked up at his companion with questioning eyes. "They won't follow us, will they, Jack?"

"I should say not!" answered Careless, and twisted one end of his mustache.

Gervase laughed proudly. In private life he bullied the soldier shamefully,—he was nine, and Jack was six and twenty,—but at heart he was sure that there was no man in all the world so tall and big and so wonderful a fighter as Captain John Careless. He let go his comrade's hand so that he could rest his fingers on the basket hilt of the long rapier that swung from Careless's baldric. "You've killed lots o' knaves like those, haven't you, Jack?"

"I've done my share, chuck."

"I'll be tall by and by," bragged Gervase. "Then I'll have a sword and fight 'em too, and we'll go back to England that daddy told me of, and I'll have a canary-colored doublet like Sir Charles Jervison's, and we'll eat hot roast goose and cheese cakes every day, won't we?"

"Roast beef now and then, Gervase," said Careless, and sighed. His belt was drawn to the last notch, and it had rested there nearly four and twenty hours.

No more words passed between the two comrades till they turned from the Hoog Straet into the bustling market-place. There sledges were squeaking over the pavement, porters were clumping to and fro, and on all sides shrill-tongued

market-women were haggling with their customers. A smell of fresh green things was borne on the moist March air, and then, from a little stand close by the steps of the great Town Hall, came another smell, a spicy, warm smell. A man was baking in a portable oven little sweet cakes that were crispy and brown.

Gervase plucked at Captain Careless's sleeve. "I wish I had a little hot cake," he hinted.

Careless made no answer, but his grip grew tighter on the small hand that he held.

"Don't we eat breakfast pretty soon?" urged Gervase. Right over his head was a bright spot in the gray sky that meant the sun stood there, and his stomach, too, told him that it was twelve o'clock.

"Perhaps there's a piece of bread in the cupboard," Careless suggested hopefully.

"No, there isn't," Gervase answered with conviction. "It was the last piece I ate this morning. 'Twas hard, too."

Careless made a grimace under his sandy mustache, — "winking with his mouth," Gervase called it, — but he said nothing. Indeed, there was nothing for Careless to say. He had emptied his pockets, he had pawned everything on which he could raise a penny, he had borrowed — borrowed of his

friends till they no longer knew him, borrowed of tradespeople till they knew him but too well. His walks abroad were now mostly in a zigzag course to avoid his creditors. He was quite penniless, and the cupboard was bare.

Careless was a man, so he cocked his hat and walked on with defiant eyes, but Gervase was only a little boy and he had no hat to cock. "I'm hungry;" he blurted out the blank truth.

Careless looked down at the pale little face at his elbow, and looked away again with his brows contracting. "D'ye see those storks, there on the roof of the Groote Kerk?" With a clumsy effort to divert the boy's thoughts he pointed toward the high walls and thick towers of the Great Church, which stood sharply black against the gray sky. In and out and to and fro upon the walls the long-legged, long-beaked storks were strolling to take the morning air. "But there's none of 'em bigger nor prouder than Flibbertigibberty, eh, Gervase?" questioned Careless.

At first Gervase pretended not to care for the storks, and gave his whole attention to hopping over the cracks between the bricks in the pavement. But when they entered the dark, smelly fish-market, he spied three of the birds jabbering

over a bit of fish, and in spite of himself he grew interested.

"Do you think Flibbertigibberty goes a-marketing here?" he asked Careless. "He'd like a piece of fish, wouldn't he? I'm going to carry some home to him." He was off before Careless could stop him.

The Dutch are the daintiest of fish-eaters. No dead things for them, if you please! All up and down the dark market stood great troughs full of water in which big fish and little fish floundered and splashed against the time when they should be popped into a market basket and borne away to an oven. If one of the captives died, out with him! Perhaps some very poor person might pay a penny for his carcass, or always there were the storks.

Gervase trotted up to a fishwife,—not to the nearest one, but to her neighbor with the hard red cheeks and bright eyes. "Will you not give me one little dead fish, Vrouwtje?" he jabbered in Dutch. "It is for my stork Flibbertigibberty. He has built him a nest on our chimney. And he comes tap-tapping at the window. I would coax him to the sill so I can stroke him. I would thank you much for one little fish."

He was a beggar, certainly, but a winning little

beggar. He got the fish, as he knew he would, and the good woman wrapped it in a cabbage leaf that it might not soil his once fine clothes. Gervase ran happily after Jack Careless, who, loath to check the boy in his poor little pleasure, but sorely troubled that he should go a-begging, had sauntered ahead in a vain effort to convince the bystanders that he did not own the child.

"See, Jack, I have the fish," cried Gervase. "Won't Flibbertigibberty be glad of it?"

He had so much to say of Flibbertigibberty and so much care to take of the slippery fish that he had no time to think of his troubles till they were clear of the markets and in the maze of narrow lanes that ran behind them. Then he caught hold of Careless's hand, and began to hop on one foot. "I'm resting the other," he explained.

"Tired?" Careless asked quickly.

"It's my slippers," urged Gervase. "Jack, why won't you let me wear wooden shoes that go clomp, clomp, like the Dutch boys?"

"Because you're a gentleman," Careless answered simply.

That statement explained everything, to Careless's thinking. It was because he was a gentleman that Careless, strong and young as he was, walked in

rags and dodged endless creditors; he was a gentleman, and he could not work with his hands; there was no trade for him but the trade of the sword. In the same way Gervase, because he was a little gentleman, must wear slippers, not a peasant's sabots, now that his leather shoes were worn out and there was no money to buy new ones. That was quite clear to Jack Careless's mind.

But if the reasoning was clear to Gervase's mind, it was also far from satisfying him. As they turned into the home lane, the narrowest of them all, he spied a plump little boy standing in a doorway. He wore baggy blue breeches of plebeian shag, and clumsy wooden shoes, but he was eating a great piece of bread with currants in it. "Oh, dear!" whined Gervase. "I wish I wasn't a gentleman. I wish I was just a burgher boy and I was going home to my dinner."

"There, there, don't, Gervase!" begged Careless. "Here, I'll carry you if you're tired."

He swung the boy up into his arms. There was enough misery in his face to touch even Gervase. As they turned into their own black doorway, he nestled his cheek against Careless's. "It does not matter about the dinner, Jack," he said stoutly.

"Sh!" whispered Careless, and pressed him tighter.

It was a perilous way for Jack Careless, up those three flights of stairs to his chamber. On the first floor dwelt the landlady. She, good soul! used sometimes to give hot buns to Gervase, and bid him come in and warm himself at her porcelain stove. To Gervase she seemed an admirable lady, but to Careless she seemed a middle-aged fury. He had long lost count of the number of weeks' rent that he owed her. On the second floor lived three men, to every one of whom he owed a guilder or two, and on the third floor Jost Fagel, the cobbler, was still his creditor for the last time that his worn boots were soled. So Jack Careless went up the stairs softly, squeezing Gervase tight whenever the boy made as if to speak, and never drew a long breath till he shot the bolt behind him in his own room in the fourth story.

It was a bare, cold room. The walls were hung with coarse green cloth, so old that in places the dark boards showed through. The floor was bare, and the ceiling, between the big rafters, showed the bare deals of the garret floor above. In one corner stood a bed with a pair of thin blankets

and an old rug, and there was a battered chest by the window, and a cupboard of black wood against the wall. A rickety table balanced in the middle of the room, and round it stood three stools. Over all the dust lay thick, so thick that you could scarcely stir the hangings without sneezing.

Gervase was too well used to the cold, untidy chamber to gaze about him. Instead, he ran eagerly to the window and peered forth. He had an excellent view of huddled housetops and distant church towers and green trees and the gray sky bending over all, but he saw never a sign of the long-legged stork, Flibbertigibberty.

Disappointed, he turned from the window and laid his treasured fish upon a corner of the chest. "Wish I could eat it myself!" he murmured.

Careless laid a hand on his shoulder to hold him quiet. "Some one is coming up the stairs," he said softly.

In a vague way Gervase guessed that such an unwonted thing as a visitor meant danger to them. He did not know Careless's well-defined terror of arrest for debt, but he drew closer to his side and clutched his coat. "Maybe they are seeking Jost Fagel," he whispered.

"Hush! They're coming on," breathed Careless.

A slow, deliberate step, each instant louder, sounded on the creaking staircase, on the landing. Careless was the only lodger in the fourth story. He put his arm close about Gervase. If he were carried to jail, what would become of the child?

A sharp rat-tat echoed on the panels of the door. "Within, there!" spoke a decided voice. "Open to me!"

CHAPTER III

THE COMING OF COLONEL PAULET

THE words were English. It was a full minute before the significance of the fact broke upon Careless. Dutch sergeants would never pass him the civility of arresting him in his own tongue. He made a hesitating step toward the door.

"Within, there!" the voice cried again.

"Who is it?" asked Careless, at the door by this time.

"A friend. Countersign: the cloak you shared with me the night after Naseby rout. Have you forgot Ferdinando Paulet?"

At that Careless flung the door wide, and a man in trig garments stepped over the threshold,—a short, slender man of such a trim, neat figure that you thought him young till you looked at his face. Then you saw about his mouth the lines of determination that his well-trimmed beard could not hide, and at the corners of his keen eyes the wrinkles that come of age and much planning. Indeed, Colonel Ferdinando Paulet was hard on forty, and

in all those years his wits had worked briskly. A most valuable little piece of clockwork he had been to his master, Charles Stuart, and was now to his master's son, the second Charles.

What heart there was in him, to do the man credit, was given honestly to his king; for his brains, they were mostly the king's, but they managed to do their immediate owner occasional service. While Careless and the rest of the honest, heavy-witted Cavaliers of the Hague went almost in rags, Colonel Paulet was well dressed. There was nothing gaudy in his costume; his coat and breeches were of staidest brown, but the cloth was rich and his linen was of the finest. Personal daintiness was the Colonel's luxury. He hated dirt as a cat hates water. From head to foot he was as spick and span as if he had dropped out of a bandbox into the fourth-story chamber.

"How did I find you?" Paulet repeated Careless's question. Already he had tossed by his fine, plumed beaver hat and set himself down on the least unsteady of the stools at the table. He looked up smilingly as he spoke, but Gervase, who watched the stranger glumly, took note that he smiled only with his lips, not with his eyes and all his face, like Jack Careless.

"Why, 'twas all very simple, my good Captain," Paulet went on. "I was standing near the house of our timorous English friends, the ambassadors. You went by me, somewhat haughtily, I protest, with never a glance in my direction, and I followed you at my leisure. I vow 'tis a dirty lane where you've chosen your dwelling." He glanced sadly at a speck of mud that showed on one of his otherwise spotless boots.

Careless blundered out something about being glad to see him. It was, indeed, the first time in weeks that any of his countrymen had sought his lodging place. "But I did not guess that you were in the Low Countries," he ended.

"But newly lighted, Jack," the other answered. "No, not from England. Remember, I was banished beyond seas in '49."

"Still, Jervison told me—" the younger man repeated.

Paulet smiled again. "Well, maybe I have been into England once or twice since, Jack. I'll admit it, between friends. There are still many honest folk in the home country, on the side you know of. But I've been last with his Majesty Charles II. in Scotland. There'll be rare doings anon in those parts, and maybe across the borders. 'And the

king shall have his own again!’ I sail from Terheiden for Glasgow a fortnight hence. And I want you to take shipping with me, Jack.”

Careless felt that his feet were on solid ground again. He did not know this affable, friendly Colonel Paulet who climbed three flights of dark stairs only to chat with a poor ragamuffin; but he knew well of old the Colonel Paulet who came asking you for something, — half your cloak, or your body and soul for the king, as the case might be. “So there’s a chance of fighting,” he said bluntly, “and you want me to have a hand in it. Is that what you mean?”

Before Paulet could choose a half-assenting reply, — blunt dealing was not in his line, — Gervase interrupted him. For the last minutes the boy had been scowling in his corner. It was quite a new experience for him to see Jack, his own property, absorbed in any one but his small self. He waited resentfully for some notice, but Jack did not even look at him. Then, as he pieced together what he understood of the talk, his curiosity got the better of his jealousy. He ran across the floor and leaned against Careless’s knee. “Are we going into England, Jack?” he asked.

“D’ye want to go?” Careless answered soberly.

The boy had been to him for so long both plaything and companion that it seemed perfectly natural to ask his wishes on every subject.

But Paulet did not care to have nine-year-olds brought to conference with him. "What boy is this?" he asked, with a narrowing of his sharp eyes. "No kin to you, Jack?"

Careless drew Gervase up on his knee. "'Tis Colonel Darrell's son," he said gently.

"Old Will Darrell?" Paulet questioned indifferently. "Yes, you were cornet in his troop in '44, I remember. This is the child by his second marriage, isn't it?"

Gervase squirmed at the impersonal tone, which made him feel like a bug undergoing inspection, but Careless held him quiet. "Son of the second marriage? Yes!" he answered Paulet. "Doesn't his shabby coat prove it? That rascal, the first wife's son, he's living snug, you can wager. He seized on his poor father's lands the instant the war broke out. Body a' truth! I'd like to tell him to his teeth what I think on him."

"Henry Darrell of Southurst in Worcestershire, — isn't that his style?" Paulet asked.

"The dirty knave!" growled Careless. "That was his father's estate. And he lived there in

plenty while old Colonel Darrell was starving in a strange land! Ay, sir, he was starving when I found him. The fall of '49 'twas. I had just come packing out of England, and I chanced upon the Colonel at Beauvais. He was dying in a garret, with none but the little lad to care for him. Oh, your kings, Paulet, are good at forgetting us when we've done our work and there's no more strength in us! Well, I stayed by him and did what I could till the end, and that's how I came by Gervase."

"And that's Darrell's boy," Paulet said musingly.

Gervase scarcely heeded his deliberate scrutiny. Open-mouthed, he was staring up at his guardian. "Why, Jack," he broke out, "have I a brother?"

"Yes, a nice, affectionate brother!" sneered Careless.

"Come, Jack, give the devil his due," interposed Paulet. "I've been into Worcestershire not many months since. Henry Darrell has the name of being a moderate man, none of your canting fanatics. Did he never offer to help his father?"

Careless shifted his feet, but, though unwilling, he spoke honestly. "There were letters, yes. He offered to use his influence to get the Colonel permission to come back to England,—if the

Colonel would promise this and that, you understand. Offered to give him shelter in the house that was the Colonel's own—the sneaking hypocrite! I'd like to tell him—”

“You can,” Paulet answered. “Henry Darrell is here at the Hague. I saw him in the train of the ambassadors this morning.”

Careless's jaw dropped, but Gervase piped up wrathfully, “He's my brother, and he was with the Roundheads? I won't have a Roundhead for my brother!”

“Your wishes won't be consulted, sir,” Paulet said biting. He was weary of the brat's interruptions, and he wanted to get to the main matter with Careless. “What is Henry Darrell to you, Jack?” he went on lightly. “Let him tarry at the Hague, an he will. You'll not be here for long. You're coming into Scotland to your old comrades with me—”

“I—I know not,” said Careless. His mind did not jump so quickly as did Paulet's. He was still brooding on Henry Darrell, and he set his jaw at the thought of him.

“Tut, tut! You won't be so mad, surely, as to refuse a troop of horse and maintenance when 'tis offered you,” urged Paulet. “Or do you live so

well here that you're loath to quit? Faith, you don't look it, Jack!"

Careless stirred uneasily. He was sensitive about his shabby clothes and bare lodgings.

Paulet saw that he had found a tender spot and pressed him further. "You'd better say 'Yes,' Jack. You don't look as you were thriving. Even if we can't do much for you in Scotland, I can promise you a coat with two elbows and boots with whole soles."

Instinctively Careless shuffled his ragged boots under the table. Paulet was an old friend, and he was bland and smiling, so that the young man could not resent his slurs. But Gervase, with brown eyes blazing, slipped off his guardian's knee and walked away.

"Why won't you come with us, eh?" Paulet resumed. "You can scarce have grown lazy with luxurious ease —"

"There's the boy," Careless said shortly. "I can't go away and leave him."

"If that's your only trouble!" Paulet said, with a shrug. "Come sup with me at my lodgings to-night, Jack, and we'll talk further." He rose to his feet, and, scarcely glancing at his hat, laid his hand upon it. "On the Wage Straet I'm lodg-

ing, hard by here. There'll be wild goose and onions for supper, and —" He went to clap the hat on his head then, and a slimy dead fish fell out.

"Pest!" cried Colonel Paulet, and shook the hat at arm's length. "That imp of a boy!"

The boy had confessed his guilt by vanishing. Never a trace of Gervase was to be seen in the chamber, but before Careless, heart-sick at thought of losing the promised supper, could stumble on a word of apology, a defiant little voice shrilled from under the bed. "You shan't mock at my Jack's clothes. Wear your hat all slimy yourself!"

The fish certainly had not improved the fine beaver. Paulet gulped with anger. "That brat deserves a whipping," he said curtly, but even if he had dared to lay hand on this little piece of live property that belonged to Captain Careless, he could not have condescended to the undignified action of groping under the bed for the boy.

Instead he looked severely at Jack Careless, and Jack, desperate to earn that wild goose, tried to be stern. "Gervase, you rascal, come out!" he ordered, and lifted one corner of the blanket that drooped over the edge of the bed.

"No!" cried Gervase, with a catch of frightened laughter. "He can wear his old hat home."

Paulet mastered himself. He never lost his temper, but he never forgot a resentment, whether against man or dog, child or woman. "That's a droll boy," he said, with a dry little laugh. "You'd better teach him manners, Jack, or you won't have him long."

CHAPTER IV

THE HAND OF AUTHORITY

JACK CARELESS went down the three flights of stairs with Colonel Paulet for two excellent reasons. First, he knew that the fact that he was seen thus familiar with a gentleman of prosperous appearance would have a soothing effect on his creditors. Second, he wanted to appease Paulet for that affair of the fish, and get, if possible, a renewal of the invitation to supper.

"At heart Gervase is a good lad," he urged. "The mischief has got into him to-day."

Paulet sighed. "You're not doing right by the child, Jack," he said. "I'm sorry to see it. I knew Colonel Darrell, and I'm grieved to find his son growing up a veritable savage."

"But what am I to do?" Careless asked unwarily.

"Why, that is your own concern, my friend," Paulet answered.

They had reached the pavement by this time, but not a word had been said of supper, so Careless still trailed along at the Colonel's elbow.

"I shall proffer no advice in so delicate a matter," Paulet went on musingly. "But seek back into your own youthful experiences. When you transgressed all laws of decorum, what happened to you?"

Careless made a wry face. "Whippings!"

Paulet shrugged his shoulders. "You're answered," was all he said.

"But I don't wish to whip Gervase," Careless replied hotly. "He's too little for me to strike. And he's hungry most times and cold often. He's wretched enough without a beating. I wouldn't strike him for half the kingdom."

There Careless stopped. It was easy to renounce so indefinite a possession as half the kingdom, but it was not easy to give up the roast goose and onions. They were very definite and attractive to a man who had not eaten a mouthful for twenty-four hours. He glanced at Paulet, but the Colonel's whole attention was given to picking his way down the lane. Supper was plainly the last thing in his mind.

"But I can't whip Gervase," Careless repeated desperately.

"If you were so vindictive as to wish to do so, I should dissuade you," Paulet answered, with a

philosophic air. "The fact that it is a pain to you makes me love you the better, Jack. But you should master your feelings, for the lad's good. A sharp correction now may spare him much later sorrow."

Then, as Paulet saw by Careless's face that he and his supper had won the victory, he added, in a somewhat personal tone for a philosopher, "And don't you let him off with a couple of clips on the ear. Here, I'll lend you money to buy a sufficient whip, and do you thrash him soundly."

On the Spuy, by the canal, there was a proper shop. Careless remembered the place unwillingly, and thither the two men turned their steps, Paulet very businesslike, Careless quite down at the mouth. "Look here," he said, "you can lend me the money before we go in. I'm not going to have you buy whips for me as if I were a little boy at a fair."

Paulet handed him the coin, a five-guilder piece, at sight of which Careless plucked up his spirits. When he had bought the whip, he dropped the change into his pocket, with a look at Paulet that said plainly, "Ask for it back, if you dare!"

Paulet smiled at him, well pleased. "And

you'll sup with me at eight to-night, Jack," he said, as he turned away.

Left alone at the corner of the street, Careless stood flicking the lash of the new whip across his boots. "I've sold Gervase," he muttered; "sold him for four guilders and roast goose to my supper."

But Gervase, high up in the cold fourth-story chamber, had never an inkling of the plot against himself. For a time, after the steps of the two men had died away on the echoing stairs, he still crouched beneath the bed. He was pretty sure of Jack Careless; but he felt that this new man with the cold eyes would be capable of stealing back and pouncing upon him unawares, so for long minutes he stayed in hiding. At first he drew figures in the dust that was thick on the floor,—horses with straight lines for legs and men with round O's for bodies, and the ugliest man of all he called Ferdinando Paulet. Then he pretended that the bed, with its blankets hanging over the sides, was his tent, and he was a great general for the king, and had just won a victory over the wicked Roundheads. But he did not like to think about the Roundheads when he was alone. It seemed to him very dark now in his

lurking place, and when one of the blankets slipped to the floor he started at the rustling sound so that he bumped his forehead against the side of the bed. After that he scrambled out into the room, where it was lighter, and flattened his nose against the leaded squares of glass in the window. The sight of the houses out of doors gave him a sense of companionship, but still he was very lonely, and he was glad when he heard Jack's step on the stairs.

Gervase went dancing to the door and rattled it open. "Hurry, Jack!" he called down the black stairs. "You've been hours away."

The footsteps ceased. In the dark pit of the stairway Gervase heard for a moment no sound save that of Jack's heavy breathing. Then, with unusual clatter, Jack came stamping up the stairs. As he stepped into the scant light of the landing, Gervase saw that he had a whip in his hand—a beautiful new whip with a long leather snapper.

"Jack!" the boy cried delightedly. "I like you a deal to-day." He had the new toy out of Careless's hand in a twinkling, and fell to snapping it. The lash made a glorious crack like the report of a pistol.

Gervase could not stand quiet for joy. "Just

hear to it, Jack!" he cried. "And red stripes, three of 'em, twisting round the handle, and it all shines and smells of paint. I thank you mightily, Jack."

As for Jack, he stared one blank instant, then he threw back his head and laughed and laughed, though Gervase, for the life of him, could not guess why. "It is a brave plaything, eh, Gervase?" he chuckled at last. "Colonel Paulet lent me money on purpose to buy it for you. And he lent me more money besides. Look you here."

There were two currant buns in each of Jack's breeches pockets, and a spicy sausage in one coat pocket, and an orange in the other, so artfully had he designed to make his peace with Gervase after the whipping. But now there was no thought of whipping anybody. Instead Careless and Gervase sat down together at the rickety table, and Gervase ate half the sausage and a bun and all the currants out of Careless's bun besides, while Careless cut the orange for him into a lobster's tail.

Gervase kept the bright new whip on the table so that he could admire it while he ate. "It's been a rare day, hasn't it, Jack?" he said beamingly.

"True word, boy!" Careless smiled back, and

added what made the day for him a rare one, "I'm to sup with Colonel Paulet to-night."

"Will there be cakes, do you think?" asked Gervase. "And I can wear my plum-colored doublet, can't I, Jack?"

Careless looked troubled. "My dear little fellow," he began. "Well, you know you are a little fellow, after all, though I forget sometimes. But the Colonel, he doesn't understand, and we've much dry business to talk over, and — you know, he didn't bid you to supper, Gervase."

"I don't like him," Gervase said promptly. He looked glum for a moment, then slipped off his stool and clambered up on Careless's knee. "You're not going, are you, Jack?" he said sweetly. "I don't wish you to go. Prithee stay with me. You can have the sausage. You — you" — his voice faltered — "you can have half my orange."

"Eat it yourself, honey!" Careless laughed. "Eat it and go to bed snug, like a good boy, and I'll buy you a cake in the morning."

Gervase snuggled closer to him. "I don't care for a cake. I wish you not to go with the Paulet man. And I won't go to bed!"

Careless rubbed the boy's hair awry, then put

him down from his knee. "Be good now," he said. "I must brush myself before I go."

Gervase ate his orange in offended silence, while Careless gave himself to the freshening process. It was very brief. He ran a brush over his shock of sandy hair, and he knocked some dust off his shabby green clothes, and turned up his boot tops to hide the worn knees of his breeches. Then he lit a cherished candle-end, and, pulling off his green coat, sat down to mend a rent in the sleeve with black thread and a big needle. Of course he stuck himself, and at that he almost lost his temper. "You'd best jump into bed," he bade Gervase. "When I go, out goes the light."

Now Gervase, for all that he was a Cavalier and a gentleman, feared the dark, and in the mood that was on Jack to-night, he dared not defy him. Sulkily he took off his clothes and curled up in the bed. For a little time he watched the candle-light on the wall and Jack's big shadow, and then he began to whine, "Are you truly going to leave me, Jack?"

"Go to sleep and forget it, lad."

Gervase made a great pretence of sobbing. He hid his face in the bedclothes, but he left his ears uncovered to catch Jack's first word of relenting.

"Oh, I don't wish to stay in the dark. And my tooth is aching. Oh, oh, it aches fearfully! Don't go away, Jack! Oh, my tooth! my tooth!"

"Gervase," said Careless, "you're a shameless story-teller. Your teeth are sound as a squirrel's. You never had an ache in your life."

Then Gervase sat up in bed, stiff as a little ramrod. "Captain John Careless," he said, "*are* you going away to supper?"

"Master Gervase Darrell," Careless answered, "I honestly am." He rose to his feet and deliberately drew on his coat.

"I hate you like anything!" Gervase cried. "I tell you not to go, yet you're going. You're bad as the Paulet man. I hope the Roundheads will get you. No, don't you touch me. I'm not your boy any more, and I won't be friends with you again, ever!" He flounced over, with his face toward the wall and his lean little shoulders set toward the room.

Careless had seen the like of this many, many times in his eighteen months of guardianship. He dropped the flint into his pocket that Gervase might not try to light the candle and so burn himself. Then he put out the light and went to the door. "Good night, Gervase," he bade.

Gervase kept sulkily silent till he heard the door close upon Careless. Then, with a sudden change of mood, he turned his face toward the door. "Jack! I don't wish you to go," he said, in his coaxing voice.

But he got no answer. In sober earnest Jack had gone away and left him. The darkness thickened and the room was very silent. Gervase crept down under the bedclothes and shut his eyes. He heard a mouse stir in the wall, and at the sound he started in alarm. Down below, in Jost Fagel's room, he heard men singing, and he felt comforted by the sense of their nearness; but when they ceased the dark seemed lonelier.

Gervase thought of the supper to which he had not been bidden. Jack and the Paulet man would be eating cakes and maybe figs and baked fish, and they would have beer in bright pewter mugs. And he was all alone in the dark! He cried a little in earnest now, no feigning. If he had known of what Jack and Colonel Paulet were speaking at that moment, and what dire change their meeting was to work in his life, he would with excellent reason have cried much harder.

CHAPTER V

AFTER THE ROAST GOOSE

"AH! poor Gervase!" said Colonel Paulet, after Jack Careless's trencher was filled for the second time. "So you thrashed him?"

"I gave him the whip, true enough." Careless took refuge in the subtleties of the English idiom. "He won't forget it. No more, prithee, Colonel. I do not care to speak further of the matter."

Paulet took a swallow of wine, and, with a laugh in his eyes that was not altogether amiable, surveyed the young man opposite him. Jack had stealthily let out his belt, and he was eating the longed-for goose, steadily and deliberately, with his eyes on his trencher.

"What a block you are, my lad!" Paulet's thoughts ran placidly. "The first clever man can twist you round his finger. Decidedly, my good Jack, you are a fool. But set you on a horse with fifty men behind you,—my word! you turn them all as mad fools as yourself, and fighting fools at

that. And 'tis fighters we are seeking now. We can't waste money on you, for our pay chest is parlous low, but you're worth several dinners and a new coat and a passage into Scotland. I must have you, Captain Careless. And to get you I must get rid—but I can spend nothing to accomplish it—I must get rid of that dirty, little, impertinent brat you're so fond of."

Thus ran Paulet's thoughts, while Jack, all unsuspecting, ate his supper in busy silence. Then, when the meal was ended and the two men sat over their wine, the Colonel began to speak of the Scottish expedition. All men in Scotland were loyal to Charles II., he repeated, and in England thousands who were displeased with Cromwell's rule would flock to the king's standard. Less than a twelvemonth, and Charles II. would sit upon his father's throne. Why, it was the chance of a lifetime for a man of mettle. You rally to the king's party, you fight his battles, and there you are, presently, Sir John Careless, with the colonelcy of a troop and an estate made out of the confiscated lands of the Roundheads!

Careless listened with his gray eyes bright. Command again, and adventure, his soul longed for, but he came back to the stumbling-block

of the afternoon. "I'd like mightily to join with you, Colonel, but there's Gervase. I suppose I couldn't — er — take him with me?"

"Heavens, Jack!" laughed Paulet. "You can't go to war with an orphanage at your heels!"

"I said nothing of an orphanage," Careless answered doggedly. "I spoke of Gervase."

"Why don't you take lodgings for him somewhere while you're gone?" suggested Paulet.

"Pretty!" scoffed Careless. "If I should get a bullet through me, what comes of him? They'd throw him into the kennel, an the charges were not paid. No, I can't leave him. I promised Colonel Darrell I'd care for him."

"Well, are you doing so?" Paulet questioned. "Nay, don't be angered, Jack. I have the boy's good at heart. You that are so hot against yielding him to another, are you so sure you are giving him what should be given to a lad of his birth? With my own eyes I see the child is in rags. You tell me he is often cold and hungry. And it does not take one long to discern that he is receiving no instruction either in the letters or the deportment that befit a young gentleman."

"I've done what I could for him," Careless answered shortly. "And it's more than any of

the others that call themselves his father's friends have done."

That was a home thrust, but Paulet did not even wink. He scored the taunt down to Jack's account, with a promise to pay the young man at some future time, but for the present he held to his policy of gentle persuasion. "I know I have no right to utter a word. You must pardon an old friend's officiousness," he said.

So humbly did Paulet speak that Careless blushed at his own rudeness. "Since you care for the boy's welfare,— " he stammered. "I—I thought at first you had forgot his father, but now— Look you, Colonel, you may be able to help me. There are many gentlemen of our party still in the Low Countries, and some have their ladies with 'em. You have a wider acquaintance amongst them than I. If some of them would take Gervase for a time till I had made the Scotch campaign— He's a good little lad, I'll swear. Maybe you know some countryman of ours we could trust."

"My dear Jack, I'm quite helpless," Paulet answered regretfully. "It's so long since I've been in these parts I find myself forgotten by our people."

Careless's face fell. The less chance there was

of going into Scotland, the more urgent seemed to him the necessity that he should go.

Paulet watched him closely. "Do you truly mean," he asked, "that you would give up the boy, if he could be placed in the charge of gentlefolk who would give him good care and proper breeding?"

Careless fidgeted in his chair, looked at his boots, then at the ceiling, finally at Paulet. "I take it I should have to, for his own sake," he admitted grudgingly.

"And then you would come with me to Scotland?"

"With all my heart," said Careless, but his face was troubled.

"I will do what I can," Paulet promised, "though I have little hope. But in any case, let me see you here often, Jack."

So Careless went back to his chamber with mixed feelings. He wanted to better his fortunes in Scotland, but he did not want to give up Gervase. Yet he wished honestly what was for the lad's good. At any rate, he was glad that Paulet was so friendly, and he reflected that it was an excellent goose they had had for supper. Surely the Colonel's last words meant more such meals!

For Paulet himself, as soon as he saw the door close upon his guest, he leaned back in his chair and laughed noiselessly. Then he went to the table in the corner of his chamber and set himself down to write. "I have your promise, Captain Jack," he muttered. "Gentlefolk who'll give him good care, eh? I'll warrant! I'm loath to do a good turn to any of the wrong party, but I must have you, Jack, and thus I'll have you cheaply."

He dipped his pen into the ink and deliberately began his letter. The name that went at the top of the sheet was the name of Henry Darrell.

CHAPTER VI

"YOUR BROTHER HENRY"

GERVASE always found it profitable to quarrel with his guardian, for next day he invariably received from the remorseful Careless a tribute of sweets — that is, if Careless had a penny to spend. Just now Careless had at his disposal the remainder of Paulet's five guilders, so on the morrow of the supper Gervase had not only a cake with plums in it, but a handful of figs and an orange. The money would not last long, of course, but neither Gervase nor Careless stopped to think of that. Gervase ate his figs and Careless smoked his pipe, and they spent the morning in walking happily under the clean lime trees that bordered the canal.

Careless pointed out to Gervase the clumsy green boats that lay alongside the paved walk. For the hundredth time he told him how, by slow stages, those boats carried you past Delft to Rotterdam, and there you went aboard a pink, and so home to England. And in England the grass was

always green, and the sky was always clear, and men had enough of food and drink.

"We're going there soon, aren't we?" Gervase harked back to Careless's idle question of the day before. "I shall like it mightily."

Careless hastened to change the subject. "Gervase, did not your father use to teach you things — lessons and Latin and the like?" He spoke what was uppermost in his mind.

Gervase answered engagingly, that he had "forgotten."

"Didn't you use to own a Latin book?" urged Careless.

Again Gervase "didn't know," but Careless was set to find out. That afternoon he overhauled the contents of the chest by the window, and many and various were the treasures that he unearthed. Gervase seized eagerly upon his peg top with a crack in it, and his ball, which he had thought lost; but he was not at all interested when Careless at last drew forth what he was seeking — a slim little limp-backed book.

"Put down those toys, Gervase," Careless bade, "and come sit here by me. You must learn your Latin."

He spoke with unusual firmness. All night he

had been thinking of what Paulet had said, — that the boy was having none of the instruction that befitted a young gentleman. Instruction, in Careless's own case, had come by way either of a whip or of a Latin grammar. In Gervase's case, the whip had failed, so now Careless fell back on the Latin.

Gervase hesitated, with his head on one side and his eyes questioning, but at last he decided that Latin was no more than a new game, so he sat down beside Careless. "I remember the book now," he began conversation. "Daddy bought me it."

"'Tis the *Distichs* of Cato," Careless answered, with a conscientious pucker between his brows. "Most boys of nine can read them all out of the Latin into the English, and write them fairly too."

"I can put out my tongue and touch my chin with it," said Gervase, and demonstrated with a pink triangle of tongue like a little dog's. "Can you, Jack?"

But Careless was not to be diverted, and, like it or no, Gervase had to listen to some extraordinary information. The fun of watching Jack in the novel capacity of schoolmaster held the boy quiet at first. He was even graciously pleased to repeat that *equus* meant *a horse*, and *bellum*, *a war*, but

he had no earthly use for *equi*, *equo*, *equum*, and the rest.

"I can speak French and I can speak Dutch and I can speak English," he protested. "I do not need to speak Latin."

Then, when he found that protestation helped him not at all, he cuddled against Jack's arm most winningly. "My head aches," he said, in a sad little resigned voice.

"*'Parentes ama.'*" Jack hardened his heart and went on explaining the Latin precepts. "That's 'Love your parents,' Gervase."

"I have no parents," Gervase answered piteously. "Daddy's dead. And *he* wouldn't 'a' made me learn Latin when my head does ache."

That ended the lesson. Jack took Gervase to the window to watch for Flibbertigibberty, and gave him the orange that a little while before he had said must not be eaten till supper-time.

If Paulet had been present, he would undoubtedly have sneered that Jack was soft-headed. Perhaps he was. At any rate he was a soft-hearted young man, when once he was separated from his horse and his troop, for his soldiers and his enemies told a different tale of him. But now he was banished from home and friendless in a strange coun-

try, and little Gervase had grown very dear to him. And the prospect of giving him up to others, which Paulet's words had opened, made him even more tender of the child than usual.

On the fourth day after Paulet's visit Careless decided that it might be well to take Gervase to see the Colonel. Paulet, he made no question, could find friends for the boy, if he only took a fancy to him. At their first meeting Gervase had scarcely ingratiated himself with the Colonel, but Careless hoped by this visit to set that right.

So Gervase was bidden to put on his plum-colored doublet, an order that charmed him. With a remnant of prudence Careless rarely allowed him to wear the plum-colored doublet and breeches, for they were the last whole garments left to Gervase. This prudence was a sad cross to the boy, for the clothes, though somewhat scant for him, were of a deep, rich color, and he liked fine colors as well as if he were a little magpie. Once clad in the plum-colored suit, he felt that it was a red-letter day indeed, and pranced round the chamber in a riotous state of pleasure that promised anything but good behavior for the afternoon.

He grew sober enough, however, when Careless insisted on his brushing his disorderly hair; and

Careless's lecture on deportment, which lasted all the way to Paulet's lodgings, had also a chastening effect. Better than expectation, Gervase behaved himself properly in the Colonel's presence ; he said "Yes, sir," and "No, sir," and never spoke till he was spoken to. The unfamiliarity of the place had indeed a sobering effect on the boy, and, remembering the fish, he was a little afraid of Paulet. He kept close to Careless throughout their stay.

Paulet was quite affable. He said that Gervase was a tall fellow for his years, and he even gave him a piece of candied ginger root. Gervase thanked him politely, but he still kept close to Careless.

The men had talk of their own to interest them, and it was all of the expedition into Scotland. Gervase listened while he ate his ginger, and, though he did not comprehend all that was said, judged that something was afoot. Doubtless he and Jack were going to England, he reasoned, but he said nothing to Jack about the matter ; for he had noticed that Jack grew moody and silent when he spoke of his delight in the prospect of the journey. But though he kept silent, he made a beautiful plan to help toward the expedition.

The very next afternoon Gervase had the chance to put his plan into execution, for Jack Careless

went out to speak with his former friend, Sir Charles Jervison, about the Scotch expedition, and, as the walk to Sir Charles's quarters was a long one for a boy without shoes, he left Gervase at home. This was quite contrary to his usual custom, but, to his surprise, Gervase stayed behind without a murmur. Careless did not guess that Gervase, in a spasm of helpfulness, hailed his absence as a fine opportunity to pack their clothes against the coming journey.

As soon as Careless had gone down the stairs, Gervase went about the task. First, as a sign of his manliness and importance, he laid off his doublet. He did not know that there was a fine rip down the back of his shirt, nor did he care that both his elbows peeped through the sleeves.

His next movement was, by pushing and straining and shoving, to overturn the chest and empty all its contents in a heap in the middle of the floor. "That saves taking 'em out piece by piece," he explained aloud.

Then he dragged from beneath the bed a dusty, battered cloak-bag, that no pawnbroker would look at, and he began to fill it. Of course, all the clothes could not go into the bag, so Gervase made a wise selection. He discarded all stupid

articles, such as shirts and stockings, and he stuffed into the bag all the gayest-colored garments he could find, regardless of their tatters. His plum-colored satin went first, and then Jack's orange-tawny waistcoat, which was in gorgeous shreds, and a cherished pair of blue breeches that Gervase had outgrown, and Jack's old cloak that had once boasted a watered silk lining. By that time the bag looked rather full, so Gervase stamped upon the contents once or twice. Then he sat down on the bag and panted for breath.

The window was opposite him, and through it he could see a rift of blue sky and a chimney with a great stork's nest upon it. He thought of Flibbertigibberty, and wondered if he could ever coax him to the window so that he could stroke him. Then he grew aware that some one was coming up the stairs to the fourth story. It was not Jack's step. This was an undecided step, the step of a man who was unfamiliar with the way.

"It's the Paulet man," thought Gervase, and glanced toward the bed. He had half a mind to hide beneath it, but he remembered the candied ginger and sat still.

There came a knock at the door,—a brisk, decisive rat-tat.

With Jack's lecture on deportment still clear in his mind, Gervase went to the door and opened it. "Come in, sir," he bade politely. Then he pitched back a step, still clutching to the latch, and stared wide-eyed.

It was not Colonel Paulet who stood on the threshold. It was a man in sober, dark garments, a man with a clean-shaven face and keen blue eyes and short hair. It was the man who had seized hold of Gervase on the morning when the Roundheads entered the Hague.

Gervase's face went white and his teeth chattered. "You—you—" he gasped. It was all very clear to his mind. The Roundhead had caught him once, and Jack had saved him. Now he had watched his chance and come, like a coward, when Jack was away.

Gervase would have clapped to the door and bolted it, but he saw that already the man was over the threshold. He flinched into the nearest corner. "W-won't you come in and sit you down, master?" he got out. Civility was his only hope, and then, too, if he could beguile the enemy into the room, he might dodge by him and make his escape through the door.

"Is Captain Careless here?" asked the stranger.



"Gervase's face went white and his teeth chattered. 'You — You —,' he gasped."



His voice sounded to the boy as loud as the crack of doom.

"He — he's just round the corner," quavered Gervase.

The man was looking him through and through. "You are Gervase Darrell, are you not?" he asked. He took a swift step toward the boy, and before Gervase could dodge or run or save himself in any way, had lifted him up in his arms and kissed him. "Gervase," he said, "I am your brother Henry, and I've come to take you home with me."

Though Gervase knew not what he did, he must have kicked to free himself. At any rate, he found himself on his feet again, and he rubbed the back of his hand across his cheek as if the kiss had burnt him. "I — I'm glad to see you," he gasped. "Won't you sit down — Jack — he'll come soon — prithee!"

Henry Darrell smiled, and took three unsuspecting steps into the room. Gervase made one spring for the door, which still stood open. He banged it to in the face of possible pursuit, and headlong leaped down the stairs.

"Heil! Heil! Is Old Nick at your heels?" shouted Jost Fagel, from his doorway.

To Gervase that shout seemed the uproar of a hundred pursuers. He dashed down the last flight of stairs, and fell and bumped his knee, but ere he could feel the pain, sprang to his feet once more. He was out in the street, with the free air round him. For the first time since he left the room, he caught breath, and, turning to his left hand, made off at his best speed for the Wage Straet. Jack was gone, and the Roundheads were upon him, and his only refuge now was the Paulet man.

CHAPTER VII

THE BONE OF CONTENTION

THAT tidy piece of clockwork, Ferdinando Paulet, sat at the table in his chamber, with his cuffs turned back and his brows slightly puckered. He had before him parchment and pens and ink, and papers covered with notes and rough sketches, and, with never a blot or a stain, he was drawing a map of Worcestershire.

He had not made for nothing those secret expeditions into England at which Careless had hinted. An accurate knowledge of the country is the best aid which an invading army can have, and such knowledge Paulet had brought back for his king's service. He knew every nook and corner of a half-dozen Midland shires, even to the cross-roads and scattered country houses. It was, in fact, the name of Southurst, Henry Darrell's house, that he was printing opposite a black dot in the lower corner of his map, when a sudden patter of feet on the landing without made him stay his hand.

The footsteps were light and frightened. With

them mingled the sound of hurried breathing, and then came the click of the latch and a tearful voice: "Let me in! Prithee, Colonel Paulet! Let me in, quick!"

The unbolted door was thrust open. Paulet started so that his pen made an ugly black mark on the spotless map. For it was Gervase Darrell who tumbled into the room—bareheaded, coatless, wide-eyed with terror, and almost sobbing.

He came stumbling across the floor and caught Paulet's arm and clung to him, as if he were a friend. "Hide me, please hide me!" he panted. "There's a Roundhead—a hulking knave—and Jack's gone—and left me— He says he's my brother—he walked into our room— Hide me quick before he comes!"

"Come to your room?" Paulet asked sharply. "The fool!"

Men are, after all, uncertain puppets to play with, as the Colonel realized now. So much perplexed was he by this unlooked-for manœuvre on the part of his puppet, Henry Darrell, that for the instant he knew not what to do. But, at any rate, he shook off the frightened boy, whose grip was rumpling his cuff.

"We must go to the room," he said at last, and

rose and took his hat. "If Jack finds him there, they'll leave nothing of each other but their boots. Come, sirrah!"

Gervase gazed at him bewilderedly. "I dare not. He's there. I'm afraid."

"Nonsense! Jack will take care of you," Paulet answered, and catching the boy by the wrist, led him from the room.

Gervase came almost unresistingly. Not only was he too tired to struggle, but he did not know how struggling would profit him. He could not fend for himself in the present peril. This man, Jack's friend, was his only help.

As they reached the street, he wriggled his wrist free and took hold of Paulet's hand. "You won't let him touch me, will you?" he begged.

"Surely, no," answered Paulet.

At that moment he would have promised anything. His only desire was to get the boy back to Careless's chamber. To have the child actually in his hands, to be called upon to decide himself between the claims of Careless and of Henry Darrell, was the last thing that he wanted. Darrell must have his little brother, of course. That was what Paulet had desired and had planned. But Paulet, however much he pulled at hidden strings,

did not wish to let his hand be seen in this matter. If Jack Careless knew that he had betrayed the child to Darrell, Paulet could guess what would follow. Not only would he lose a profitable officer for the king's army, but he might also suffer violence himself. Jack was a hasty, brutal young savage when his temper was up.

Spurred by such reflections, Paulet strode along at so brisk a pace that Gervase had fairly to trot to keep up with him. The tall houses with their peeping windows, the open doorways where women gossiped,—all went sliding by. In a very short time the two were groping up the dark stairs to Careless's lodgings, Paulet with ears alert for sounds of a scuffle, and Gervase, all bewildered, clinging to Paulet's hand.

But when Paulet thrust open the door of the chamber, he found to his relief that he was in time. Careless and Darrell were together, but so far neither had harmed the other, though their looks and bearing were anything but pacific. Careless was standing with his hand on his sword-hilt and his hat-brim over his brows, fairly glowering on his adversary, while Darrell, for his part, was leaning nonchalantly against the window-seat and coolly scrutinizing the younger man.

Careless was doing all the talking, in a voice that with each word grew louder. "I'm right glad to have speech with you at last, Mr. Darrell," Paulet caught one sentence, and he was asking himself how he should silence Jack, when Gervase settled the difficulty for him.

Without an instant's hesitation, the boy ran straight to Careless's side. "Tell that Roundhead to go away, Jack," he said, and, holding to Careless's hand, turned and faced Henry Darrell.

With a short laugh, Careless pressed the child to his side. "You hear, Mr. Darrell? I think the boy has said it pretty plainly."

"What's gone amiss here?" struck in Paulet.

Darrell turned toward him. He guessed well enough who this man was, but he kept good faith and never betrayed what share the Colonel had had in bringing him to this place. "If you are a friend to this—gentleman," he nodded toward Careless, "pray urge him to listen to reason. The lad there is my half-brother, my nearest of kin and my heir. Naturally I prefer to bring him up myself rather than leave him in the kennels of a foreign city. For near two years, since he vanished from Beauvais, I have sought some trace of him. Quite by

accident I have come upon him now. I mean to take him back to England."

"Do you?" said Careless. "Well, as his father's friend, I prefer to bring him up in his father's principles, rather than to give him into the hands of a rebel and an Anabaptist. I mean to keep him here at the Hague."

Darrell held his lips shut, but his blue eyes were the color of cold water.

Paulet, who knew Jack pretty well and had known men like Henry Darrell, was in agony. "Come, come, be reasonable!" he urged. "You both desire the boy's good. You've admitted yourself, Jack, that he's not having the care that he should have. And doubtless Mr. Darrell will provide well for him."

"I shall at least provide the child with whole garments and warm lodgings," Darrell answered. With merciless eyes he scanned Gervase's ragged shirt and the bleak chamber in which they stood.

"Yes, it *is* a bare room," drawled Careless. "And 'twas a barer room than this where your father died, Mr. Darrell. I held him in my arms. I didn't see *you* there."

It was a brutal speech, even granted that Darrell had betrayed his father as Careless believed. Since

Darrell, as Paulet knew, had done his best to bring his father back to England, it was a cruel taunt, so cruel that Paulet himself cried, "Hush, Jack!"

Darrell's face whitened. He turned, and for an instant gazed out at the window, but when he faced about, his eyes were steady and his lips set. He came quite up to the table where Careless stood. "Captain Careless," he said, in a low voice, "I have tried hard to treat you fairly in this matter. As an older man and a wiser man, perhaps, and, I hope, a better man—" he seemed to let the last words slip out in spite of himself—"I have sought to judge you leniently. I have tried to believe that it was indeed with some mistaken notion of carrying out Sir William Darrell's wishes, and doing what was best for the boy, that you carried Gervase away and never suffered his kinsfolk to know whither you carried him. I have tried not to believe that you did this thing—that you imperilled the boy's health and his soul's welfare by your strange course of life—solely to harass and hurt me. So I would have had him from you by fair persuasion, as one gentleman deals with another, but since you will not have it that way!"—he shrugged his shoulders. "Do you know how much money you owe, Captain Careless?"

Jack changed color. "It's no concern of yours," he tried to bluster.

"It's very much my concern," Darrell answered, with the ghost of a smile in his cold eyes. "I've paid a few of your debts in the last days. You stand my debtor now for a tidy sum. And I have two sergeants in the room below. If you will not hear to reason, I have only to call them up and give you in charge. You'll be fast by the heels in prison to-night, and I'll take Gervase."

"You cur!" cried Jack, and a dozen other epithets thereto.

"Be reasonable, be reasonable!" begged Paulet; and then, in the midst of the commotion, the poor little live parcel of goods over which they were wrangling raised a sharp cry.

"Jack! Don't let him take me!"

Careless's hand slipped off his sword-hilt. "Aren't you proud of yourself?" he said brokenly, to Darrell.

For one instant he stood irresolute, then he sat down on the nearest stool and took Gervase on his knee. "Listen here, boy," he said hurriedly. "This fellow is your brother, and you must go with him because he can give you a new coat and three meals every day, so they say it's for your good to go."

He got no further, for Gervase flung his arms about his neck, and burst out sobbing. "But I don't wish to go with him. Please, Jack, don't give me to him. I'll be good. I'll learn my Latin. I can say *equus*, *equo* a'ready."

Careless groaned. "I've got to give you up, else they'll take you anyway," he said. "Don't cry so, honey. And if he doesn't use you well, write to me at Van Zandt's on the Hoog Straet, and I'll come and make him smart for't, and take you away with me again."

But Gervase clung the tighter to him. "Take me away now. I won't go with him. I'm afraid. Let me stay with you. I won't eat so much. I'll be good."

"Put him down and end it, Captain," bade Darrell. "He'll cry himself ill."

Careless looked up, and his own eyes were wet. "I take it if you were in his place you'd cry," he said grimly, but he realized that there was sense in his enemy's counsel, and he realized, too, that he himself was very near to breaking down. He kissed Gervase on the wet cheek that was uppermost. "Be a good lad always," he whispered, and put him down.

Still the child clung, and Careless had to unclasp

the small arms that were round his neck. "If you're rough with him, I'll kill you," he flung a last word at Darrell, and, plunging out at the door, banged it to behind him.

The crash of the door made Gervase lift his face from his hands. Too bewildered to sob, he glanced about him, — at the Roundhead brother, at the Paulet man, who had betrayed him. He gave a choked cry and dashed toward the door, but Paulet had shut it and kept his hand on the latch. Gervase tried to wrench open the door, struggling with all his slender might to shake off Paulet's hand. "Jack! O Jack!" he wailed.

He could hear the clatter of feet descending the stairs, dying away, lost at last. He dropped down in a little heap by the threshold, and hid his face against the door.

CHAPTER VIII

IN THE HANDS OF PHILISTINES

FOR two philanthropic persons who had just rescued a poor child, it must be admitted that in the next few minutes Colonel Paulet and Henry Darrell cut rather sorry figures. To Paulet all children were wretched little beasts; to Henry Darrell, whose own son had died a mere baby, they were unknown creatures. Both men stood helplessly over the ragged, slender little figure of the boy.

"Come, Gervase," Henry said at last, in much the same tone that he would have used if Gervase had been nineteen instead of nine, "don't lie there. No one means to harm you. Get up and put on your doublet. We must leave here at once." He took Gervase by the arm and raised him to his feet.

The boy shrank as far from him as possible, but he did not resist nor did he cry. He went submissively to pick up his doublet, but then the

sight of the cloak-bag and the scattered clothes that, ages ago it seemed, he had been packing so happily, was too much for him. He dropped down on the heap of clothes, with his arms folded on his knees and his face hidden, and sobbed as if his heart would break.

"We should have kept Jack," Paulet said resentfully. "He knew how to manage the brat." The noise of the child's crying set the Colonel's teeth on edge, but he did not mean to quit Gervase till he had seen him safely stored in his brother's lodgings.

Henry wasted words neither on Paulet nor Gervase, but, picking up the lad's doublet, put him into it, one limp arm after the other. Not having the slightest conception of the child's abject fear of him, he was rather pleased to find him so obedient.

But when Henry pushed him toward the door, Gervase found again a will of his own. "I c-can't go without my c-clothes," he whimpered, and dodged back to the pile of gorgeous tatters about the cloak-bag.

"I'll buy you new clothes in London," Henry answered. "Give no thought to those rags."

Gervase cried out at this insult. "They're *not*

rag. They're my clothes and Jack's clothes. And I *will* take my plum-colored suit, and my top, and my ball, and my Cato book; and my whip 'cause Jack gave me it. O Jack! Jack!" Again he collapsed, with his head on his poor little armful of treasures, and spotted the precious plum-colored doublet with tears.

With grim patience, Henry took the few articles from the boy and swiftly bundled them up. "There, you can have them. Only stop crying."

Perhaps Gervase would have stopped, for his brother's tone had been kindly, if at that very moment a shadow had not darkened the window. He looked up, and there he spied a long-legged stork that was tapping at the casement.

Gervase wailed afresh. "It's Flibberti—" he could not get out the whole name—"he's come to say good-by. He knows I'm going. And he never came before. And I shan't ever get to stroke him now. Oh, dear!"

"The mischief take the bird!" said Paulet. "We'll never get away from the room."

Henry Darrell stood Gervase on his feet decisively. "Stop it," he said. "You should be ashamed to cry like a baby, a tall lad like you."

It was a rather short-sighted remark. As Jack

had reminded Henry, if he had suddenly found himself deprived of all his friends and sent into exile in the custody of a squad of Cavaliers, he would doubtless have done something desperate himself. And Gervase, who was too young to curse his fate and die, could relieve himself only by lamentable weeping.

But the Roundhead's taunt—for so Gervase esteemed it—struck home. The boy choked back his sobs, and walked submissively down the stairs with his captors. He was so little and helpless! Jack was gone, he knew not where, and he scarcely dared to follow in search of him. The sun was down now and the narrow lanes were dusky, and Gervase did not like the dark. He was afraid of his companions, but he was almost as much afraid to leave them. He hugged his bundle, which was all that was left of his old life, and he kept close to Paulet. He was a little less afraid of him than of his Roundhead brother.

The two men talked, as if it were no more than a little dog that trudged between them. "It's you I have to thank for recovering the child, no doubt," Henry Darrell said once, and Paulet answered modestly, "No thanks, sir. I am glad to see Sir William Darrell's son bestowed in good hands."

In a vague way Gervase realized that the Colonel had played a double part, but still he held to him and kept as far as he could from Henry. All the time he tried to scan the faces of the people that passed in the twilight, and once his heart gave a great leap as he spied a tall figure that he thought to be Jack's. They had now entered the Spuy, where he and Jack had so often walked. He felt that Jack must be there waiting for him; he could not believe that Jack would let them take him away without a struggle. If not to-night, then next day, surely, Jack would come.

Then that hope was taken from Gervase. "You leave the town soon?" Colonel Paulet questioned.

"To-morrow morning," Henry answered crisply. "What slight service I was able to do in the embassy, a dozen others can do as well. I have leave to return into England. And you can well understand it is better that I go at once."

Gervase's step lagged. "Colonel Paulet!" He twitched at his companion's sleeve, and when the Colonel halted, whispered, "Prithee, sir—if you'll hold him while I run down the next lane, I—I'll forgive you for letting him get me at the first."

Paulet laughed. The schemes of the little monkey seemed really droll to him.

"What now?" asked Henry.

Paulet told him the boy's request, quite as if it were all a joke.

Gervase could not understand why it was more honorable to betray his confidence than to betray Jack's confidence or that of any grown man. He dropped Paulet's hand. "You're worse than a Roundhead, and I hate you," he blazed.

But none the less, when Paulet said good-by a moment later and left them at the door of Henry's inn, Gervase was sorry to see him go. He knew Paulet, and Paulet at least knew Jack, but this short-haired man was a stranger and an enemy.

Not daring to be anything but obedient, Gervase went timidly up the stairs and through the door which Henry opened for him, and he sat down on a form as he was bidden. The form stood by a porcelain stove, with pictures of Balaam and his Ass, and Jacob and the Angel upon it, and presently Gervase saw Balaam and the rest blurrily through tears. He was crying again, somewhat because he was lonely and frightened, and somewhat because he knew that his brother disliked tears, and he hoped that if he cried a great deal, Henry would grow so tired of him that he would give him back to Jack Careless.

Certainly the crying distressed Henry. He told Gervase to stop,—at which Gervase cried the harder,—and then he told him to come eat his supper, but though Gervase sat down at the table, he choked over the first bite. At last Henry said rather sharply that bed was the best place for him, and, accordingly, Henry's man, who wore his hair short like his master, took Gervase into a little inner room and helped him into bed. It was a big, soft bed, far softer than the one in Jack's fourth-story room, but Gervase missed the hard mattress to which he was used.

Scarcely had he lain down, when Henry came in and stood by the head of the bed. "Have you said your prayers, Gervase?" he asked conscientiously.

With an indignant flounce, Gervase came to his knees among the bedclothes and clasped his hands. "O Lord," he prayed aloud, "take me away from this man and send me back to Jack Careless, and I'll be a good boy forever and ever, world without end. Amen!"

Then he ducked under the clothes and lay quaking. He wondered what answer his captor would make to this bold defiance; but when at last he ventured to lift up the bedclothes the least bit and

peep out, he found that the room was dark. Henry had taken the candle and gone away.

At that discovery, the loneliness and the strangeness of the place grew and grew on Gervase till presently he was sobbing again. Only now he had decided that doubtless Henry, being a Roundhead and evil hearted, was glad to hear him cry, so, not to gratify him, he kept his head under the pillow. He cried till his eyes smarted, and his nose was sore, and the pillow was wet. He thought that hours must have passed, but in reality it was little more than twenty minutes before the harassed Henry was again at the bedside.

Henry turned back the bedclothes, pulled by the pillow, and set his small brother upright in bed. Gervase gasped. Henry looked alarmingly tall in the candlelight, with his coat off. "This must stop, Gervase," he said firmly. "You'll make yourself ill. Here's my handkerchief. Wipe your face, now. And drink this."

"This" was a noggin of milk. Gervase was glad of the milk, but he shed four hot tears into it as he drank.

Henry put the pillow dry side up and put the boy down with his head upon it. "Now go to sleep," he ordered. "I will leave you the candle."

Gervase gave a weary but defiant sob.

Henry ran his fingers through his short hair with a despairing gesture, but the victory was already in his hands. Gervase was now too worn out even to cry. Henry had not been gone five minutes from the room when the boy cuddled down into the bed, with his face toward the friendly candle, and went fast asleep.

CHAPTER IX

THE PATH OF BANISHMENT

TRUE to his word, Henry Darrell set out next morning for England, and Gervase, poor little unwilling captive, of necessity went with him. In the gray morning—they had dull gray weather throughout the journey—they boarded one of the green canal boats that lay by the Spuy. It was one of those same boats in which Jack Careless had so often told Gervase that sometime they two would journey away together. But now Jack was left alone at the Hague, and Gervase, with heavy eyes and aching head, saw the trees of the town turn to a green blur and sink at last behind the great dikes of the canal.

So damp was the air that Henry forbade Gervase, in his thin garments and his slippers, to loiter out of doors. Sorely against his will, the boy left the deck, where he was finding some comfort in watching the broad-backed horses that towed the boat and in talking with the helmsman. He went

down into the dreary little cabin, and there he spent the endless day with his brother.

Gervase found that Henry beguiled the time with the reading of books, and at that discovery he distrusted him the more. He remembered that Jack, who was all that was good and lovable, had never looked at a book, while that double-dealer, the Paulet man, had kept many lying about his chamber. No doubt Henry was of Colonel Paulet's stamp.

At dinner Gervase kept himself as far from his brother as the narrow table would let him. During the meal he made another sad discovery: Henry, though generous in providing bread and beef and cheese, did not believe that young folk should eat cakes and the like sweet stuff. It was on the tip of Gervase's tongue to say that Jack always gave him cakes, but he swallowed the words and ate the despised bread and beef in silence.

Henry was well pleased to see him eat at last. "That's a good boy, Gervase," he said approvingly, as he cut him a second piece of cheese.

Gervase put down his knife. "I'm not a good boy," he quavered. "I never minded what Jack said. I'm a story-teller—he said so. You don't know what a mighty bad boy I am. Hadn't you

—hadn't you better send me back to Jack Careless?"

All the approval died out of Henry's face. "Don't begin that strain again," he said sternly. From his experience of the night before he had gathered that firmness was his only course in dealing with his little brother.

Firmness, in this case, had even more than the desired effect. Gervase shrank back as if he had been struck, and as soon as possible slipped away to the farthest corner of the cabin. There he sat silent all the afternoon. Once or twice he rubbed his hand across his eyes.

Meanwhile Henry, with his attention, to all seeming, bent upon his book, was almost equally unhappy. In the months in which he had sought for his little brother he had formed a very clear idea of what the boy would be. Gervase, he had fancied, would be like his own little son William, only several years older, — a sturdy, yellow-haired, red-cheeked boy, good and docile and affectionate, above all, affectionate. Even to himself Henry did not acknowledge how he had hungered for that affection.

But now, in the dreary cabin, with the rain drizzling past the windows, Henry had his disillusion-

ment. This pale, dark-haired boy, who shrank from him and watched him with suspicious eyes, could never take his dead child's place. Henry felt a spasm of cold anger for that worthless young ruffian, John Careless, who had ruined Gervase, and for Gervase himself, who was frightened without reason. But he knew that his anger at the child was unjust, and mastering it instantly, he held the more firmly to his first determination. Though Gervase was not the lad whom he had hoped for, still Gervase was his brother. In charity he must carry the poor waif home and do what he could to undo Careless's work and train up the boy to a useful, God-fearing manhood.

So Gervase found that his artless devices and his little coaxings to be sent back to Careless helped him not at all. Steadily the journey went on. The sluggish boat bore the travellers down the canal to busy Rotterdam. There they spent three forlorn days in a damp inn, and then, when the wind came from the right quarter, they boarded the ship that should bear them to England. The strip of sea widened behind them, and Gervase realized at last that he was hopelessly separated from Holland and the Hague and dear Jack.

One comfort Gervase had in this part of the jour-

ney,—the ship was so big that he could keep out of Henry Darrell's reach. Presently, too, he made friends with the red-capped sailors and at last even with Henry's man, Praisever Simkin. The odd name was what Gervase had been taught to expect of a Roundhead, but Simkin himself, quite unlike Jack's description of all Puritans, was not lank nor cadaverous. Instead he was a short, stocky man with a cheerful face, and he told Gervase pleasant things about England. Gervase learned from him that "Mr. Darrell," as he always called his brother, lived in a great house in the country, where there were trees and fields, and horses in the stable, and, best of all, dogs. There had even been some tiny puppies when Mr. Darrell and Simkin left for the Low Countries. Gervase wondered if Mr. Darrell would perhaps give him a puppy for his own, and he began to think more hopefully of the country to which he was journeying.

But all Gervase's hopes were dashed when they landed at London. It was late of a stormy afternoon. The murky river was puddled with rain, and the low-lying shore was hazy under the fog. The travellers left the snug ship, which had come to seem like home, for a wet barge in which they were rowed up the Thames. Gervase disliked it all,—

the dirty water and the dreary shore and the lowering sky.

They passed through the shadow of a great stone fortress that stood up black against the leaden clouds. "That is the Tower of London," Henry told Gervase.

Gervase supposed that it was there that the Roundheads had killed poor King Charles. He looked away from the grim fortress, and he tried to move farther from his Roundhead brother.

After the long row in the barge came a long ride in a hackney coach through dripping streets that were growing dark with twilight. Gervase peered out eagerly for some sign of the trees and the fields of which Simkin had told him, but he saw only houses, and when the coach drew up at last, he still saw houses all round him.

"Do we stay here?" he questioned.

"For a time, yes," Henry answered. "'Tis my brother Hutton's house."

Without further chance to question, Gervase found himself hurried up a flight of steps, through a great doorway, and into a lighted hall where there were men in livery. Then he and Henry stood in a gay little room hung with gilt leather, and a lady in a brocade petticoat creaked up to them.

"You have found the child at last?" she said, and patted Gervase's cheek.

The boy drew back, offended at the caress. He was quite unused to women. So it was a bitter hurt to his pride when, a few moments later, a middle-aged dame in a white coif came into the room, and he was bidden go with her to the nursery. He pressed close to Henry's side and caught his hand. "Let me stay with you," he begged. Though he disliked Henry, at least Henry was a man.

Henry, for his part, looked surprised at this demonstration. "Go with Dame Britton and get your supper," he urged. "You can play with Mistress Hutton's boys. They are of your own age. Go, now."

Gervase did not budge. "I don't like boys," he said. "Prithee, let me stay."

But that was out of the question. Henry knew too well the order of his sister-in-law's household to let the whims of a wilful boy disturb it. "Do as I bid," he repeated more sternly.

Since there was no help for it, Gervase went away quietly with Dame Britton, but he kept at a safe distance from her; he was not going to have her patting his cheek. In her wake he

clambered slowly up two flights of dimly lighted stairs, and then, through a doorway that opened on the landing, he caught the sound of boys' voices and laughter.

Bred up among men, Gervase knew little of other children. He hesitated, with his hand on the balustrade, and he thought of Henry, his only friend now, who had sent him away without a care, and he thought of those boys, who would mock at him, no doubt. "Oh," he whispered, "I do not like England!"

CHAPTER X

THE MARTYRDOM OF A CAVALIER

GERVASE found the Hutton boys quite as disagreeable as he had expected. There were two of them,—Thomas, who was ten, and Oliver, who was seven. There was also a sister, Anne, of Gervase's own age, but, being a girl, she counted for nothing. It was with the boys that Gervase was concerned. They sat on a form opposite him at the nursery table, and all through supper they jostled and crowded each other and made short conversation and laughed, with glances at him. Truth to tell, they were seeking, after their fashion, to make friends with the stranger, but Gervase did not understand.

At last Thomas, as the elder, plunged into direct question. "What's your name?" he asked Gervase. "How old are you? Do you go to school?"

"No," Gervase answered blankly. Such an idea as that of going to school had never entered

his head, but now he felt that he must not be outdone by the Hutton boys. "I'm learning Cato at home," he said impressively.

"Ho!" scoffed Thomas. "And you nine years old! *I* read Cato years ago. *I'm* reading Terence now. I go to Paul's School. I should think you'd go to school."

"Only girls and babies don't go to school," piped Oliver.

Gervase was nettled at being called a baby. "Gentlemen don't need to go to school," he said disdainfully.

"Ho!" said Thomas again. "You wait and see. My Cousin Henry'll put you to school. And if you don't do as you're bid," poor Thomas spoke from his own sad experiences, "why, then, you can look to yourself, for the master'll flog you every day of your life."

"I should never let any one whip me," Gervase told himself with quivering dignity.

Tired though he was, it was hours before he slept that night for thinking of Thomas Hutton's words. He reflected that Mr. Darrell had seized very gladly on the first opportunity to be rid of him. No doubt he would send him away to school, as Thomas had said. And Gervase, though he had

no great desire to stay with Mr. Darrell, had even less desire to go to school where boys read Terence and were flogged every day.

So next morning, when Dame Britton told Gervase that his brother wished to speak with him, he decided that it had to do with school and promptly ran away. He found a good hiding-place behind the curtains in the gallery, and there he sat holding his breath till Dame Britton discovered him, and — a sad blow to his dignity — haled him by the collar into Henry's presence.

Henry already had on his hat, and he looked vexed and impatient. "Come, come, what does this folly mean, Gervase?" he asked sharply. "I sent for you that I might take you down into Cheapside to be measured for your new clothes."

At the word "clothes" Gervase's face lighted. He enjoyed buying pretty things, and it was months since he had had that pleasure. He forgot all about school and went joyously away at his brother's side, with his head full of the thought of canary-colored doublets and orange-tawny breeches and cloaks lined with violet silk.

The dingy streets of London seemed to Gervase less dingy than they had seemed the night before. There was even a blink of watery sunlight, though

he had begun to think that the sun never shone in Henry Darrell's country. Moreover, Gervase was wearing, in the place of his slippers, Thomas Hutton's leather shoes with buckles, — Thomas's best shoes. The thought that he was pranked out in the spoils of his enemy tickled Gervase so that he could not forbear prancing in the buckled shoes.

Henry checked him with displeasure. "Walk on two feet like a little gentleman," he bade. "You're too old for such antics."

Gervase's happy face fell. "Jack used to let me," he murmured.

But Henry was not Jack, as Gervase had already learned. Henry did not offer to halt to let him gaze at the shops, nor did he tell him anything about the strange sights of the bustling streets. He kept fast hold of Gervase's hand, and shielded him from the jostling of passers-by, but that was all. When it came to the actual buying of pretty things, he took him, not into a gay mercer's shop, but into a dull, leathery-smelling place, where Gervase had to stand still and be measured for new shoes. After that they went into an equally uninteresting sempster's shop, where Gervase had to submit to more measuring and listen to dull talk of holland shirts and cambric bands. Henry

seemed to care for nothing but shirts and worsted stockings.

Gervase was tired and disappointed, so that he began to lag and to mutter of "going home" before they reached at last the mercer's shop. There he grew alert and interested again, for the mercer's shop was as gay as he had pictured it, with bolts of shimmery silk and frosty satin, and fine stuffs of all brave colors.

"I should like a canary-colored satin doublet, if it please you." Gervase made known his wishes. "And breeches of blue velvet—bright blue."

Henry smiled. "You'd look like a jackanapes," he said carelessly, and went on to order the clothes that pleased him,—a suit of gray serge and another of green kersey and a cloak of good gray duffels.

"Those are not the clothes I wish," protested Gervase; but Henry, never heeding his protests, led him out of the shop, past a bolt of canary-colored satin that was just fit to make doublets of.

Gervase snatched his hand out of Henry's hold and walked at his side in a stiff, offended silence that he felt must impress Henry. Perhaps it might have done so, if Gervase had been able to keep it up till he reached the house; but, unluckily for his dignity, as they passed through Cheapside they

met a woman who carried on her arm a basket. Gervase knew that that basket meant cakes, and, sure enough, when he peeped into it he saw that it was full of fascinating dogs with curly tails, all made of gilt gingerbread.

The woman halted that he might look his fill. "Buy a fine hunting dog, my pretty little gentleman," she wheedled.

Henry was passing on, but Gervase caught his sleeve. "Brother Henry," he cried for the first time, "I wish to have a gilt dog. Buy me a gilt dog."

Henry shook his head and urged the boy along, with a hand on his shoulder.

"But I wish to have a gilt dog with a curly tail," Gervase pleaded, and twisted about to see where that charming basketful went.

Henry explained his position carefully. "Cakes that are sold in the street are usually made of old honey and bad eggs, and they are not good for the insides of young folk. If you are hungry, Gervase, you shall have a piece of bread when we reach the house."

"I want no bread," muttered Gervase, and this time he kept up his offended silence till he was safe in the nursery.

To his relief, he found that the Hutton boys had not yet returned from their precious school. Only their sister, Anne, was in the nursery, and before the afternoon was over Gervase found out that Anne, for all she was but a girl, was a good play-fellow. She let him choose what they should play, and she listened with breathless wonder to his big stories of what he had seen and done in the Low Countries. After Thomas Hutton's gibes and Henry's cool neglect, Gervase found it pleasant to be again admired.

But the Hutton boys came home at last, and then Gervase decided that life was unendurable. For this time the three boys quarrelled in good earnest. Thomas began it. "*I* wouldn't wear my hair long like a girl," he jeered.

"I wouldn't wear my hair cut short like a rebel thief," Gervase retorted, and next instant the wars of king and Parliament were being fought out in the Hutton nursery.

"Malignant!" sneered Thomas.

"King-murderer!" cried Gervase, and then, grievous to tell, the little Roundhead slapped the little Cavalier, and the little Cavalier, though unused to such work, smote back with all his might. Oliver shouted, and Anne cried, and at last Dame

Britton ran in and sent the two champions packing off to bed without their suppers.

Perhaps Thomas would have been friends after that, for, like a good little Englishman, he respected Gervase the more for the blows that he had received from his small fists. But Gervase, unused to other children, could not forgive Thomas. The old cause of dispute was kept open.

"Cavalier!" Thomas would sneer quietly, and Gervase, shaking his mop of brown hair, would answer contemptuously, "I wouldn't be a Round-head."

So a week of days passed. Gervase played happily with Anne, and quarrelled with the Hutton boys, and each day endured a visit of inspection from his elder brother. On such occasions Henry made him change his collar and wash his hands and do the like unnecessary things, and he also advised him to brush his unruly hair. Gervase paid no heed to that good advice. Under Jack Careless's guardianship he had learned that grown people often told you to do things and you did not do them, yet the world wagged on as merrily as before.

But Henry Darrell was not Jack Careless, as Gervase was soon reminded. One fine afternoon

Dame Britton called him from a game of cat's-cradle with Anne. "'Tis your brother's orders," she said. "Mr. Darrell has bidden me to cut your hair."

"Cut—my—hair?" repeated Gervase. For sheer amazement he stood quiet while she fetched the shears and a bowl and an apron. But when she started to tie the apron round his neck, he suddenly dashed her arm aside. "You wicked woman! You shan't cut my hair!" he cried, and, dodging by her, plunged away down the stairs.

He knew not whom he should seek nor whither he should turn, but as he reached the outer door and laid hand on the latch, with some thought of running out into the street, he heard from the little parlor close by the burr of men's voices. Perhaps Henry was there, perhaps Henry— After all, Henry was the only being who could help him.

Gervase pushed the parlor door wide and burst into the room. Sure enough, there sat Henry in talk with his two brothers-in-law, Anthony Hutton, young Thomas's father, and Colonel Denzil Hutton of the Parliament army. But if he had been talking with Oliver Cromwell himself, Gervase would not have hesitated. He ran straight to Henry and clung to him. "Don't let her," he panted. "She

says you said to cut my hair. I won't have it so. No gentleman wears his hair short."

As Colonel Hutton and Mr. Anthony Hutton, as well as Henry himself, wore their hair cut short, this last remark was somewhat personal.

"Gentlemen who neglect to brush their hair of a morning most certainly cannot wear their hair long," Henry answered, without temper. Then, as he had no mind to be disturbed in the important matters which he was discussing, he called Simkin, and bade him carry the boy upstairs and see to it that his hair was cut.

So Gervase's hair was clipped in good Puritan fashion, and Gervase sat moping in a corner and would not be comforted. Dame Britton, really sorry for the child, did her best to cheer him, and, as his new clothes by good luck arrived at that very hour, coaxed him to put them on. In one of the little new shirts and his new gray serge doublet and breeches he looked a tidy, proper lad, and Dame Britton and Anne took pains to tell him so.

But Gervase shook his head. "I didn't wish these clothes," he said, with quivering lip.

Indeed, he was on the verge of breaking down, and Thomas, on his return from school, gave the finishing touch. "Who's a Roundhead now?"

Thomas cried gleefully, at sight of Gervase's cropped head.

For the moment Gervase forgot his dignity,— forgot everything except that he was a poor, little, lonely, badgered, friendless boy. The tears started to his eyes.

"Baby!" jeered Thomas.

"I'm *not*!" cried Gervase, too angry now to weep. "I'm not a baby. And you're hateful. I'll *never* speak to you again." He did not, but Thomas spoke to him once more.

It was the next day, the day on which Gervase and Henry were to set out for Worcestershire. Gervase had looked forward to the journey. It would be pleasant to jump on horseback and clatter down the street under the envious eyes of Thomas Hutton. He came briskly down the stairs at Henry's summons and did not linger even to say farewell to Anne. But at the house door only two horses were waiting, and there was Henry and Simkin to ride them. So when Henry came down the steps, Gervase sidled up to him. "Where's my horse, Mr. Darrell?" he questioned.

"You? You're too little to manage a horse," Henry answered lightly, and lifted Gervase to the saddle in front of Simkin. So, the last touch of all,

Gervase started out on his journey, not prancing manfully upon his own horse, but perched before the servingman as if he were a very little boy indeed.

It was then that Thomas Hutton spoke. As the horses were swung about at the foot of the steps, with a fine clatter of hoofs upon the cobbles, he leaned over the handrail and shrilled aloud, "Ho! Baby!"

CHAPTER XI

IN THE HOME OF HIS FATHERS

"THIS is Mr. Darrell's house," Gervase told himself thoughtfully.

He was sitting up in bed with his arms clasped loosely about his knees. It was morning, his first morning at Southurst. For three days he had ridden at his brother's side through open fields and close copses, past farmsteads and uplands where ploughmen whistled at their work, and for two nights he had slept at snug inns, where at all hours sounded the stamping of horses in the courtyards. But this last night he had slept at Southurst, in the room that Henry had told him was to be his own.

Gervase glanced curiously about the room. It was a snug little chamber with a wainscot of dark oak, which was scratched and scarred as if many generations of boys had played there. Against the wall stood a big black wardrobe, and there was a table and a chair and a couple of stools,

and opposite the bed a window that looked to the east. The casement stood open, and through it Gervase could see a clear space of faint blue sky and, lower, the close-grown tops of bare poplar trees.

He slipped out of bed, and pattering across the floor, knelt upon the broad window-seat. Right below the window he saw a walled garden with flagged walks and ordered beds, and, at the southern side, a tangle of currant and raspberry bushes,—a most charming place in which to play. Better still, he saw beyond the wall of the garden the timbered roof of what must be a stable.

“No doubt the puppies live there,” Gervase said aloud. “Yes, I will get up, though I have not been bidden.”

He remembered the rooms and the passages a little from the evening before, so that when once he was dressed he found his way readily down the stairs. The great hall, which he remembered as shadowy and dismal, was now bright with sunshine, and on the window ledge basked a fat tabby cat. Under Gervase’s stroking the cat purred for all the world like a kettle on a hob.

Before Gervase was weary of the cat, a woman

came into the hall. He remembered her by the spotless white of the coif that she wore and by the way in which she parted her gray hair in two even rolls. She was Dame Greenwood, Henry Darrell's housekeeper, who had bidden them welcome the night before. Gervase turned toward her smilingly. "Good morrow," he said, with a civil bow. "May I have my breakfast?"

He had his breakfast in a little room off the hall, where the night before he had gone to sleep over his supper. There was milk and bread and new eggs and a little honey—a very little, Gervase thought. He wondered if perhaps Dame Greenwood, who served him, would give him more if he asked for it, but he decided that after all he had better not ask that first morning. He ate his bread and milk and eggs uncomplainingly, and he fed bits of buttered bread to the tabby cat, who stood on his hind legs and begged. Gervase laughed to see him and, laughing, looked up at Dame Greenwood.

He was puzzled to understand why she should gaze back at him so earnestly. Indeed, she looked as if she wanted to cry, and her old hands shook as she poured him a cup of milk. "'Tis good to see you here at Southurst, Master Gervase," she

said at last. "Bless your dear heart! You have your father's very look in the eyes."

Gervase nodded, and tossed another bit of bread to the cat. "Where's Mr. Darrell?" he asked. "I would run out and play, if he is not here to forbid."

Dame Greenwood's face grew even graver. "Mr. Darrell is sitting with Mistress Darrell," she said, and then, after a moment's hesitation, added, "Mistress Darrell is—is ill, poor lady! You must remember, Master Gervase, not to run into the north wing nor seek to vex her in any way."

"No, I'll not," Gervase promised. It seemed to him far more probable that Mistress Darrell, if she were like most women, would vex him. In any case, he was not nearly so much interested in her as in those puppies.

"Will you show me the way to the stable?" he begged, as soon as he had eaten the last mouthful. He said nothing of the puppies, for Dame Greenwood, being a woman, would doubtless know nothing about them.

But she was able to show him the way by a side door into the walled garden. She pointed out to him the gate at the end of the walk which would

let him out near the stable, and while she directed him she rested her hand on his shoulder. "I trust you'll be happy here at Southhurst, master," she added wistfully.

At that moment Gervase felt sure that he should be happy. He raced down the flagged walk and tugged open the garden gate which let him out into a world of spring greenness and soft blue sky. Close at hand was a dovecote where white pigeons, very white against the blue, were preening themselves, and from the stable came the merry stamp of horses. Gervase ran toward the sound, and half blinded by the change from dazzling light to semi-darkness, plunged into the dim stable. But in a moment his eyes grew somewhat wonted to the twilight, and he made out the figure of a man in his shirt sleeves who was standing by the stalls. He ran up to the man. "Will you be so good as to show me the puppies?" he said.

The man dropped the bridle which he had been cleaning. Gervase heard the bit ring against the boards. "Well, well!" he whistled between his teeth. "So you're the young master, old Sir William's son! Show ye the whelps, sir? My faith, yes, or aught else ye may ask!"

He led the way to a horse stall, and there, on a



“‘That’s “When the King enjoys his Own Again,”’ he
cried. ‘That’s a Cavalier song.’”

generous litter of hay, Gervase saw the puppies. There were three of them, lively little fellows, white, with the silkiest of soft black ears and black spots at the setting of their tails. Gervase cast himself down on the hay beside them, quite regardless of their mother, who made little warning throaty noises.

The stableman caught her by the collar, and setting himself down on a buckét, held her between his knees. "Quiet, Echo!" he kept saying. "Quiet, ye slut!"

When Gervase had mauled the dogs to his heart's content he sat up in the hay, red-cheeked and breathless, and looked the stableman over. He was used to the dim light now, so that he could see that his new friend was a man of perhaps five and thirty, sturdily built and well sunburnt, with impudent eyes and a humorous mouth. Then while he still was gazing, he grew aware that the man was humming beneath his breath.

Gervase knew the tune. "That's *When the King Enjoys his Own Again*," he cried. "That's a Cavalier song."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the man, with a mock salute.

"But Mr. Darrell's a Roundhead."

"True for you!" grinned the fellow. "But his father — your father, too, sir, — was a Cavalier, and 'twas of him I learned my doctrine. I fought in his troop, — Sander Garford, and very much your servant."

"*I'm* a Cavalier, too," said Gervase, overjoyed to find a sympathizer in the enemy's stronghold, and, because Garford seemed to him somewhat like the big, boisterous men to whom he was accustomed, he dogged his footsteps lovingly all that morning.

Garford was very good to Gervase. He told him the names of all the horses in the stable, and he let him take one of the great whips to snap, and he even, crowning happiness! let him ride one of the cart horses to the horse pond and back. He did not say, "You're too little to manage a horse," as Henry Darrell had said.

"I like it here at Southurst," Gervase told Garford. That was when they were coming up from the pond, Gervase clinging tight to the halter and Garford walking at the horse's head. But Garford really was doing nothing. It was he himself who guided the horse, Gervase was sure, and every day of his life he would come to the stable and play with the dogs and ride the horses.

Then the horse thudded in upon the stable floor,

and as Garford lifted Gervase down, the boy caught sight of Henry Darrell. Henry stood by the stalls, stroking Echo's head, and though he was not frowning, there was something in the look of his eyes that told Gervase he was displeased.

Indeed, Henry felt that his displeasure was well grounded. He had taken Sander Garford into his service because the fellow had served his father and because he was now penniless, but that did not mean that he held him a good tutor for a headstrong little boy. He knew Garford's Cavalier professions, and he knew Gervase's inclinations, so he had not the slightest desire to see an acquaintance spring up between them.

Henry said nothing, however, except to give some necessary orders about the stable work, and Gervase at this mustered courage. He slipped into the stall where the puppies were, and he slipped out again with the dearest puppy of all snuggled against his doublet.

"I like this one best," he said coaxingly. He hoped Mr. Darrell would say, "You can have him for your own." Jack would have said it.

But Henry Darrell said, "Put the dog down, Gervase, and come to your dinner."

Then, as they went up through the garden, which seemed to Gervase less cheerful now, Henry said something that was even more depressing. "I must find some tasks for you, Gervase. Idleness is as bad for a boy as for a man. Come to me to-morrow morning, and I'll set you some lessons."

CHAPTER XII

THE TYRANNY OF MR. DARRELL

HENRY kept his promise. The very next morning he called Gervase into the south parlor, where he was wont to do his writing among his books; and he told the boy to bring with him his copy of Cato.

"So 'twas your father bought you this book," he said, as he glanced at the fly-leaf. Then he sat silent, with his eyes upon the book, for so long a time that Gervase began to hope that he meant to put off the lesson.

Instead, Henry turned to him with abrupt questions, and bade him decline and conjugate words. Gervase had never heard of such terms. He looked down and then he looked up, and he rubbed his hand along the edge of the table by which he stood. "Jack never asked me such questions," he said at last, in an offended voice.

"No doubt Captain Careless was a very pleasant guardian," Henry answered, with unusual sharpness.

He laid yet another sin at the luckless Captain's door. It was fairly criminal that Careless should have suffered Gervase come to the age of nine years without being able to decline *Musa*.

But Henry would remedy that, and at once! Without delay he took down several books from his shelves,—lean little grammars and a neat paper book,—and he put a cushion on a chair and put Gervase on the cushion, and shoved him up to the table. “Learn *Musa*,” he bade, “till you can say it fairly. And write it here in this book.”

He set a neat copy, and leaving Gervase to his task, went to the other end of the table, where he had some writing of his own to busy him. In his lonely house, with his ailing wife, Henry was amusing himself by composing a tract on the soil of Worcestershire. What with Latin quotations and reflections on the political needs of England, he was fast developing the tract into a volume, and he grew daily more enamoured of it.

Gervase had by this time got over his cringing terror of his Roundhead kinsman, but still, under all, he feared him and dared not disobey him openly. So, as soon as he found that Henry was looking at him, he snatched up the book and plunged into his task. After all, it would not

take him very long to learn one word, he comforted himself. But when *Musa* was done he found, after dinner, that he must spend another hour in learning *magister* and *dominus*, and next morning, when he thought to play, he was confronted with *nubes* and *lapis*. Then he took the trouble to turn over the leaves of his Lillie's *Latin Grammar*, and he found that there were fearsome things called subjunctives, and endless pages of Latin words still before him.

Gervase went back to the poor little shifts that he had used with Jack Careless when he did not wish to work. He hardly dared coax Mr. Darrell, but he said piteously, "My head aches."

Henry dismissed him, and Gervase raced off to the stable, where he played with the puppies all the morning. But that afternoon, when he said that his head still ached, his brother answered that he knew a good remedy for that kind of headache. He mixed a draught of exceedingly bitter medicine, and, standing over Gervase, made him swallow it, every drop. As Henry had studied medicine at Leyden, in the days when he was his father's younger son, he was able to choose a dose that would not hurt Gervase, and he considered that he had taken an excellent way to cure the boy

of shirking. Indeed, Gervase never had a headache again at lesson time. But he was old enough to feel bitterly humiliated that his brother should have caught him in a fib and punished him in that childish way. He loved Henry no better for the affair of the medicine.

To tell the truth, in spite of his first anticipations, Gervase found himself most unhappy at Southurst, — and it was all Henry's fault. The servants, from Dame Greenwood, the housekeeper, down to Roge, the shock-headed stableboy, all liked Gervase and would have spoilt him, — "if Captain Careless had not done it already," Henry said grimly. Gervase was quite happy when he could run away to the stable or the kitchen, and because he was happy, it seemed, Henry did his best to prevent his spending all his time in those delightful places.

After a while, when Gervase found that to go where Henry forbade meant extra tasks, he sought amusement outside the kitchen and the stable. There was the horse pond, but Henry objected to his wetting his feet at will, and there was the walled garden, but the gardener objected quite as vigorously as Henry himself when Gervase uncovered the newly planted bulbs to see how they were growing.

But Gervase discovered at last a wide territory of orchard and of neglected lawn, where there had on~~ce~~ been a garden, which now was going to wilderness again. Sometimes he found in the grass daffodils and violets, the offspring of that lost garden, and the sense that he himself had discovered them made him like them better than the bedded flowers of the walled garden. He could have been happy here, not with the uproarious happiness of his romps in the stable, but in a quiet way, playing his fanciful plays by himself for hours at a time, if Henry had only let him alone. But always there were lessons, lessons, lessons with Henry in the hateful south parlor. Gervase hated that room the more because through the window he could see the world from which he was imprisoned,—the world where the branches of the orchard, all in leaf, were beckoning, and the young grass was bowing in the wind.

Henry seemed to think that a boy should find amusement enough in learning *Propria quae maribus*, and in sitting for endless decorous hours in the house. Gervase hated that quiet, stupid house. He must not go into the north wing, because Mistress Darrell lived there; and he must not slide down the balustrade nor stamp nor shout

in the hall, because such conduct did not become a little gentleman. At mealtime, too, he had to sit opposite Henry at the table, and Henry always vexed him with bidding him drink quietly and keep his fingers out of his trencher.

"Jack never worried me so," protested Gervase. "I'd liefer be Jack's kind of gentleman."

But if the house was dreary in the daytime, it was fearful at night. There was never a house so dark, thought Gervase, nor where such awesome shadows flickered across the window-panes. He was considered old enough to put himself to bed, and indeed he was old enough to have died sooner than confess his tremors, so at night he would take his little unsteady candle and creep away alone up the stairs to his chamber, starting at every creak of a board or scurry of a mouse in the wainscot, and with wide eyes peering into every shadowy corner where something might lurk.

Once in his chamber, he would undress hastily, while he tried to watch both the wardrobe and the bed. By day he never gave a second thought to the wardrobe. He knew that it contained only his few clothes. But at night he could not tell what fearful, strange shape might slowly push the door ajar and peer out upon him. No threats or

promises would have induced him to open that wardrobe door and hang up his clothes of an evening. He used to fling his clothes on the floor, right where he stood, and Henry, coming into the room one morning, chided him for his untidiness. And then the bed,—oh, that bed! What might not lie beneath it and catch at his feet as he clambered in?

Gervase finally devised an ingenious bridge of chair and stools from the safe centre of the chamber to his pillow, and over this he promenaded each night, candle in hand. When he was safe in bed, he would blow out the light, and then he would hide beneath the clothes, with every nerve a-quiver, and lie trembling till he fell asleep.

On all nights the lonely chamber was a fearsome place, but toward the end of Gervase's second week at Southurst came a night of high wind that was more dreadful than any. For hours the casements rattled and the timbers snapped in the wall. The wind came shrilling round the corner of the house and fairly shook the bed on which Gervase lay. There was no hope of sleep for him. He crept down to the very foot of the bed, and with his hands pressed to his ears, waited for the blessed daylight to come.

But when the gray dawn came at last, it brought small comfort. The terror of the night still hung over the boy. How was he ever to take his candle and go up alone to that hateful dark chamber? How was he ever to wear through the next night and the next, and all the endless succession of black nights?

Then, in the midst of his terror, a happy thought came to Gervase. He was sure that he would be quite brave if he only had something alive to take to bed with him, and what could be better for the purpose than one of those darling puppies? It would be of no use to ask Mr. Darrell's permission, he knew; but Garford would be willing, and to Gervase, Sander Garford seemed much more than Henry to be the owner of the dogs.

That evening, after supper, Gervase slipped out to the stable, where sleepy Roge was making all fast, and chose the puppy he liked best. Echo knew him so well that she paid little heed to his fumbling in the hay, till he gathered up the puppy. Then she started to her feet, but Gervase ran out at the side door and shut it upon her.

The puppy nestled blinking in his arms. "You like to come with me, don't you?" cooed Gervase, and rubbed his cheek against the creature's silky head.

Already it was dusky in the garden, but Gervase was afraid of nothing while he had that warm, live thing hugged to him. He crept through the passage, tiptoed across the hall, past the door of the south parlor where Henry sat, and so came safely to his chamber, where he tucked the puppy snugly up in bed. Then he had to leave the dog for a little time while he went downstairs and read a Psalm aloud to Henry. That was the evening custom, and Gervase hated it; but this night he acquitted himself fairly and soon could run away to his room.

The puppy was squirming beneath the coverlets. "You were lonesome, weren't you?" said Gervase. He went to bed this time without the aid of the stools, and blowing out the light, lay down beside his guest. With new courage he kept his head out from under the clothes while he talked softly to the dog and cuddled him in his arms. He did not see why his companion need be so restless.

Spite of the puppy's twists and little whines, Gervase had almost dropped asleep when below in the garden he heard a deep note. Echo was whimpering and crying at the garden door of the house. "I wonder what she's seeking," murmured Gervase.

The puppy had heard, too, and he gave foolish

little answering whimpers. "Sh, doggie!" soothed Gervase and squeezed him tight. "I won't let anything hurt you."

Then Gervase heard some one coming up the stairs, down the corridor, past Henry's door, coming to seek him, no doubt. He hid the puppy beneath the clothes and nestled down himself. He heard the door creak, and through his closed eyelids he caught the glow of candlelight. He heard the clicking of a dog's claws on the bare floor, the stamp of a man's boot-heels, and then he felt that Henry stood looking down at him.

"Gervase!" The voice was sharp. "You are awake. Open your eyes. Have you taken one of Echo's puppies?"

"I—I—" stammered Gervase, and just there puppy himself whined aloud.

Henry put back the clothes and lifted up the little dog. The mother rubbed herself against his knee. "Surely you knew better," Henry said sternly. "The creature is too little to be taken from its mother. See how you have fretted her."

"She has two others," urged Gervase, sitting up in his bed. "And I didn't hurt him. Give me back my puppy."

But Henry, who had been dragged from his tract

on the soil of Worcestershire by the poor hound's complaints, thought himself very indulgent in that he did not offer to punish the troublesome boy. He took the puppy under his arm, the candle in his other hand, and with no further words turned to the door.

One instant Gervase looked blank, as he saw his comfort go from him. Then in a flood the memory of all his woes came upon him—the Latin grammar, and no cakes, and the copy-book, and the dark room, and the bitter medicine, and now his puppy taken away! At the moment, in his misery, he had no fear even of Henry. “You’re hateful!” he cried aloud. “You wish me to be unhappy. I won’t live with you. I’ll write to Jack. I’ll write to-morrow morning. He’ll come take me away. And he’ll make you smart for it, he said he would.”

CHAPTER XIII

A STROKE FOR FREEDOM

CONTRARY to custom, Gervase followed Henry into the south parlor next morning without being bidden. "I will write my letter now, Mr. Darrell," he announced. He held his slender body erect and uptilted his chin. He knew that it was a great step he was taking, thus to turn his defiant words of last night into action, and he was braced to meet Henry's opposition.

Henry glanced up from his writing. "Eh? What? Your letter?" he asked bewilderedly. It was surprise enough to him that Gervase should come voluntarily into the parlor. Usually, against lesson time, Praisever Simkin had to ferret out the boy from some corner of the garden or of the stable.

"My letter to Jack," Gervase repeated stoutly, for all that his heart was thudding. "I said I should tell him."

"Ah, yes, I remember," Henry answered, and



“‘I will write my letter now, Mr. Darrell,’ he announced.”

looked, not at Gervase, but out through the window, with his lips tight set.

"He'll say no. He'll scold," thought Gervase. "But I *will* write, for all of him."

Just then, when Gervase had lashed himself into a fine state of defiance, ready to disregard whatever the hated elder brother in his anger should say or do to him, Henry chose a fair piece of paper from the pile at his elbow and held it out to him. "Your pen is newly mended, isn't it, Gervase?" he said, with patient courtesy. "You had better write your letter at once, before lesson time."

Gervase was taken aback. The ease with which he had won the victory robbed it of most of its satisfaction. Still, it was victory, and, bent on profiting by it, he scrambled up on his chair, at the end of the table opposite Henry, and, dipping the pen deep into the ink, began to write. The first few words went swiftly, then Gervase paused and drew a long breath ere he began again. He noted now that Henry, busied with his own writing, was paying no attention to him. Gervase was stung by this neglect. Henry knew that he was writing to Jack to take him away; Henry ought to be troubled.

Gervase thought it well to remind his brother

of what he was doing. "Mr. Darrell, how do you spell 'abuse'?" he asked, in a challenging voice.

Henry told him, simply and without comment.

"Is there one 'l' or two in 'cruelly'?" Gervase demanded, after another moment of silence.

Again Henry told him.

The pen fairly spluttered under Gervase's fierce grip. A helpless anger — it must be anger — made his throat fill. He had thought that Henry would be sorry, at least that he would be vexed, but Henry went on with his writing as calmly as if his brother were doing Latin exercises.

The letter was finished at last, — a bitter, bad-tempered little letter, for Gervase had written it almost as much for Henry's eyes as for Jack's. He felt sure that Henry would read it, and then Henry would know what he thought about him. That prospect pleased Gervase. He leaned back in his chair and stared defiantly at Henry's bent head.

Through the open window was borne a smell of the moist earth and of sprouting things, the smell of the springtime. Suddenly it came over Gervase that he would not be there at Southurst to see the trees in the orchard turn white with blossoms, and to eat the cherries and the strawberries.

"Well?" Henry said, and deliberately put by his writing. "The letter is done? Bring it hither and I will superscribe it for you."

Gervase dismounted importantly from his chair and carried the letter to his brother. The great moment had come. Henry would read the letter. Gervase shut his mouth tight, and, gazing at Henry with unwinking eyes, waited for what should happen.

What happened was that Henry took the blotted letter, folded it without so much as a glance, and, dipping his pen into the ink, turned to Gervase. "'To Captain John Careless.' What is the rest of the superscription?" he asked.

"'In the care of Mynheer van Zandt, on the Hoog Straet, at the Hague,'" Gervase answered defiantly. "'Post — post-haste' in the corner, please."

Henry directed the letter, neatly and clearly, sealed it, and laid it with two letters of his own upon the table. "Garford shall carry them to the village this afternoon," he said. "Now go to your book, Gervase."

Gervase fetched his Latin grammar and flung it down noisily upon the table. "Shan't have to learn many more lessons for you," he muttered,

but Henry, who had turned back to the soil of Worcestershire, made no reply.

When the lesson was said at last, and said very badly, Gervase sauntered out to the stable. He went slowly, with his hands in his pockets, for the seriousness of his position was beginning to weigh upon him.

"Sander," he addressed the ex-trooper, as soon as he was inside the stable, "I think I shall go away from here very soon."

Garford was treating one of the cart horses for a sore foot. He looked up at the sound of the boy's voice. "Going to put ye to school, are they, master?" he asked.

"No," said Gervase. "I have sent for Jack Careless to come and take me."

Garford bent abruptly to his work. Gervase did not see the twinkle that came into his eyes. "It's bad you're going, sir," he said presently. "Who's to ride the horses to water for me now?"

"I'm sorry," Gervase faltered. There were no horses at the Hague, he remembered. "But Mr. Darrell is glad that I am going."

Still slowly, Gervase sauntered back to the house. After last night he had no heart to look at the puppies. In the garden he halted more than once.

By and by there would be currants and raspberries in the tangle by the wall, and the borders of the garden beds would be bright with star-eyed daisies and flaunting gilliflowers,—and he would not be there to see.

It was a very quiet and very miserable little boy who sat down to dinner with Henry Darrell that day. There were collops and eggs for dinner. Gervase remembered for the first time that he and Jack had seldom tasted hot food.

"I'd like another egg, if you please," he said, and Henry, after bidding Gervase take his elbows off the table, remarked approvingly, "I am glad to see you have a heartier appetite now for wholesome food." Then Henry turned his attention to the tabby cat, Bion, who always came at mealtime to sit at his master's elbow and beg for buttered bread.

Gervase looked at Henry, so calm, so unregardful of him, and his heart was torn. One moment he thought how Jack had promised, if Henry abused him, to "make him smart for't," and he hoped fiercely that Jack would hurt that cool, quiet man. Jack was the bigger. He hoped that Jack would thrash Henry. Then in the next breath Gervase had to look down at his trencher

lest his brother see that his eyes were filling, and he longed to cry aloud, "Pray you, be sorry that I'm going. If you would but care—a little."

Indeed, Gervase was very near to speaking out, when the door opened and Dame Greenwood came into the room. She said something in a low voice to Henry, and Henry stopped feeding his cat, and his face grew weary. "I'll come at once," he said, and throwing by his napkin, followed Dame Greenwood from the room.

Gervase finished his dinner in solitary state. Besides the collops and eggs there was custard, and of that sweet stuff he had a more generous helping than he would have had if Henry had been there. Bessie, the maid, was a special friend of Gervase. Still, even the custard did not make him forget the direful events that were to come. "Bessie," he hinted darkly, "what would you do if something should happen to Mr. Darrell?"

"Lackaday, sir!" cried Bessie, with a little jump. "What makes 'ee say such dreadful things? And there the poor mistress lying ill upstairs, and he such a good man and a kind master, I'm sure! If aught happened to him, 'deed I don't know what would come of us all."

"Well, perhaps nothing will happen to him,"

Gervase amended. Bessie's honest distress made him feel guilty.

The sky had darkened now, and by the time that Gervase rose from table the rain was falling. The water drops tapped sorrowfully against the windows. Gervase felt lonely, yet he did not dare go out into the kitchen where were his friends, the servants. It seemed to him that every one of them would read in his face that he had borne tales of Henry to Jack Careless, and Jack was coming to make Henry smart for it.

At first Gervase tried to amuse himself in the gloomy hall. He went into camp under the big table, and he lay in ambush on the window-seat, but these old plays failed to cheer him. He cast himself down on the settle by the fire, and then it was, as he sat listless, that he spied on the table by the door of the south parlor a pile of letters.

Gervase went to the table. He would not have meddled, he was sure, but when he recognized the topmost letter as his own, he thought he had the right to touch it and to take it up. Then, before he knew it, he had clapped the letter inside his doublet, and walked away to the window. "It's mine and it isn't stealing," he said defiantly to the shadowy corners of the hall.

He could not explain to himself why he had done this thing. His wits were all in a jumble. He thought of Henry, and Henry's sick wife, and the servants, his friends, who liked Henry, and the puppies that he would never see if he left Southurst, and Jack, who would surely half kill Henry.

In any case, Gervase was sure now that he did not wish to send that letter, but he made up his mind that Henry should never know that he had given in. He reasoned that Sander Garford would take the letters on the table without asking questions or counting, and so Henry would never know that one was missing, unless it was found in his possession. That letter must be destroyed, then.

Gervase wondered how he should destroy it. He remembered a tale Jack had once told him of a brave Cavalier messenger who swallowed a despatch lest it fall into the hands of the rebels. Gervase plucked off a corner of his letter and put it into his mouth, but it did not taste good and it scratched his throat all the way down. He doubted if that Cavalier messenger's letter had been as big as his, and any way he should like to know what the messenger did when it came to swallowing the sealing-wax.

A commonplace plan came next to Gervase. He would burn the letter, — but there was not enough fire in the hall, and in the kitchen the servants, who on this wet day would be clustered round the hearth, would be sure to ask him questions. In desperation he tore the letter into scraps, but then the disposal of the scraps troubled him just as much as the disposal of the letter had troubled him. For what was more likely than that Dame Greenwood, who looked after his clothes, should find the scraps in his pocket and put them together and tell Henry?

The little heap of scraps looked to Gervase as big as a mountain. He was turning them helplessly in his hand, when his eyes chanced to stray to the window that looked out upon the garden. In that instant a sure plan flashed into his mind. Without staying for cap or cloak, he pattered down the passageway, a-tiptoe lest some one hear, and, raising the latch, ran out into the garden.

The rain was coming down in torrents. The flags of the walks were all a-splash with wet, and the bushes showered Gervase when he brushed against them. But he ran spattering across the garden, and, dashing the rain drops from his eyes, looked about him till he found a soft place in the

dirt beneath the currant bushes. There, with a bit of stick and his two hands, he scooped a hole in the brown earth and laid the scraps of paper in it. "That's the end of *you*," he said.

Gervase had just filled in the hole and was patting down the dirt, when he heard a step on the walk behind him. "Master Gervase, are you gone clean crazy, sir?" came Simkin's voice. "Run into the house at once out of the wet. 'Tis Master Henry bids."

"Henry!" Gervase repeated, and glanced toward the windows of the hall. They were dim with wet, so that he could not see through them, but he guessed that Henry stood frowning behind them. "I do not wish to speak with him now," he cried in a panic.

But Praisever Simkin, who himself had no desire to be drenched with the rain, took Gervase by the arm, and without further words hustled him into the house, down the passage, and into Henry Darrell's very presence.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SOLDIER OF THE PARLIAMENT

HENRY was out of patience. He had just spent a harassing hour with his sick wife, and now he found that Gervase had profited by the moments when his back was turned to get into mischief. It seemed to him quite of a piece with all the lad's conduct. He rebuked Gervase sharply for running out into the downpour, he ordered him to drink a mugful of hot and bitter stuff, and then, though it was no more than mid-afternoon, he sent him off to bed.

Gervase went, with a pleasing sense of being a misunderstood little martyr. Illogically, while he did everything to hide from Henry the destruction of that letter, he felt that Henry by some sixth sense ought to realize his forbearance and appreciate it. He thought that he had been most forbearing, and he plumed himself upon his goodness with as much self-satisfaction as if Jack Careless,

ready to avenge him and to abuse Henry, had stood at the very gate of Southurst and only his word had kept him from entering.

This feeling did not grow less in the days that followed, and it made Henry's position as guardian more and more difficult. Gervase held that his gracious conduct in forgiving his erring brother, and his generous decision to live with him,—and with the puppies and the horses and the garden and the other attractions of Southurst,—gave him the right to be particularly sulky and unruly.

Moreover, at about this time the little rascal came to realize that he had in his own hands the means of annoying his self-contained brother, and he used them mercilessly. Henry did not like Jack Careless. That fact was clear to the dullest mind, and Gervase's mind was far from dull. He did not guess the reasons; he did not know that Henry hated Careless as the man who had turned his father against him, and now, spite of time and distance, stood between him and his little brother. But Gervase knew well that Henry set his lips and knit his brows at the mere mention of Careless's name, so Gervase mentioned it frequently.

“Jack wasn't stingy about sweets,” he would say plaintively, over his dole of honey.

"Jack didn't pore upon books like a shopman." This was said when it was lesson time.

"Jack didn't send me to bed right after supper"—forgetful Gervase!—"while he sat up and did as it liked him."

It was on the Sabbath day, however, that Gervase was loudest in his regrets for Jack. With all his heart he disliked the English Sabbath. Twice in the day he had to walk to the village at his brother's side and there listen to a sermon an hour long in the bare church, which was lighted only by cold daylight. Gervase disapproved of Henry's church. The churches to which his father had been wont to take him had had painted windows and twinkling candles. Gervase told his brother about them, calling them "Jack's churches."

Then Henry spoke to him about true and false religions, in a sterner tone than Gervase had ever heard him use. After that, every Sunday afternoon, he used to make Gervase sit down on the window-seat in the south parlor and learn by heart a Latin Psalm. Thus he combined religion and Latinity in a way that pleased him, but Gervase was unhappy. "I don't like your Sunday," he sniffed. "Jack used to take me walking on Sunday to the Vyverberg, and sometimes I'd have a bit

of bread to feed to the fishes in the Vyver. Jack let me."

But here in England Gervase was not allowed to profane the Sabbath by feeding beast, bird, or fish. Instead, one Sunday afternoon when he found a ladybird crawling on the diamond panes of the window and coaxed it to his hand and sat playing with it, when he should have been learning his Psalm, Henry opened the casement and made him put the ladybird out.

The only thing that Gervase found pleasant in the English Sabbath was the walk to church. Instead of following the stony road to Wardington village, Henry used to go by a path through the fields, over a stile, and so into a great park. Here the footpath was mottled with the sunlight that sifted through the young leaves of beeches and big-boled oaks. Squirrels chattered in the tree-tops, and in the sunny open places bob-tailed rabbits fed. But, best of all, at one spot the path crossed a brook. It was a wide, clear brook that fretted round the mossy stepping-stones. Gervase liked to linger there, and to linger, too, along the path, where it ran for a time on the bank of the brook. He could see the dark, cool places beneath the alders that bent to meet the water, and he could see the sun-

light flashing on the shallows where minnows played. Then the path bent away, across an open meadow, and so ran at last into the highroad near the village, and Gervase's enjoyment of the morning was over.

Gervase always dreaded to see the open meadow, for it meant that the highway was near, but one Sunday in May, when he came in sight of the place, he cried out with pleasure. The green meadow was all dotted with cowslips, the first that he had seen. Sunday or no, he darted toward them.

Henry caught his arm. "You must not quit the path," he said.

"I'll pluck but one cowslip," urged Gervase. "That will break your Sabbath but a very little."

"That is not the only reason that I checked you," Henry explained. "This is not my land that we are passing through. The path is free to all; you have the right to walk upon it, but if you leave it you commit a trespass on Major Dunch's land. Do you understand? You must never come here without me, and you must never step foot off the path."

Gervase nodded, rather impressed by his brother's seriousness. Still, he did think that Henry might have let him take one cowslip.

All through sermon time that day Gervase thought about the stingy man who owned the land where the cowslips grew and the brook flowed. Next morning he went with his questions, not to Henry, — he never dreamed of asking Henry anything, — but to his friend Garford. The pups were now big enough to be good playfellows. Merriman, Rockwood, and Wanton, they were called. Henry had named them, and he had not asked a certain small boy if he would like to have a word in the matter. Gervase got his favorite, Merriman, and went and sat on a truss of hay near the place where Garford was putting the saddle on Henry's gray horse. "Sander," he said, "what's Major Dunch?"

Garford began to chuckle. "You'd better never call him that to his face, sir," he answered. "Isaac Dunch is his name, and he's a major in the militia, and a sleek rogue he is!" Garford seemed to have an old grudge against the Major, for he went on, "He's no gentleman, he isn't. Naught but a farmer he was, and a mighty poor one at that. Lived at a farmstead four mile back here, Broughton Grange, they called it. Our men burned it in '43, and 'twas good work well done. But now he sets up for a gentleman. Ah, he's rich! This is a time when knaves thrive, sir. He's got his claws

on Wardington Manor here beside us. But d'ye mind? Master Henry won't look at him. They mix like wine and vinegar. No, you wouldn't be seeing him at church. He's an Independent, no Presbyterian like Master Henry. Nothing but the conventicle at Beddington will suit him — Ha! ye villain, will ye? ”

This sudden address to the horse made Gervase look round in surprise, and he saw that Henry himself had entered the stable. He guessed that Garford did not care to have his master hear him speak against his neighbor, so he asked the stableman no more questions about Dunch of Wardington Manor, but strolled away to examine his other dear friend, Bessie.

“No doubt Sander Garford can tell ye a deal about the doings at Broughton Grange,” said Bessie, in the contemptuous tone which she always used in speaking of the ex-trooper. “For one, he's courting a widow woman lives beyond Broughton. Ay, and once on a time Master Isaac Dunch fancied her himself, though 'deed she's but a fat old body. And Sander was with the men that burned Broughton Grange. They do say 'twas he tossed the first brand into the stable. But, be sure, he don't make his boast of it when the Major's by. Your own

father's troopers 'twas burned Broughton, sir," she ended, and then, very sensibly, as she guessed something of what went on in the lad's head, she added, "So the Major has no love to your father's sons, and don't you ever go for to trespass on his land, for there're bears and wolves in his park will eat you up, sir."

But in saying that, Bessie overshot the mark. Gervase laughed outright. "Bears? Ho!" he scoffed, and went away to think about the brook and the minnows and the cowslips. There was no brook in Henry's land.

Luckily, before Gervase had brought his vague plans to the point of actually trespassing, he came to nearer acquaintance with Isaac Dunch. One afternoon toward the end of the week, Garford took the two cart horses to be shod at the village smithy, and he let Gervase go with him. Henry had gone to Worcester town that day, so of course Gervase could not ask his permission. Down in his heart Gervase knew that Henry would have forbidden him to go on this trip, and doubtless Garford knew it too.

They rode out from Southurst in the breezy mid-afternoon. It had rained that morning. The dust on the highway was beaten down, and at the edge

of the village the boughs of the orchards were heavy with wet pink blossoms. Gervase had never ridden so far on a horse of his own. He held his body very stiffly and proudly, as he passed by the village boys, and he wished only that he had a real saddle with stirrups instead of a pad.

At the smithy several men were loitering. They talked with Garford, and with Gervase too, and one of them cut him a switch from a hazel bush that grew by the smithy. Gervase was standing in the doorway, fingering the switch, but not striking with it, for Garford said that would startle the horses, when he saw a man come clattering along the road. Right at the smithy door the stranger reined up and flung out of the saddle. Gervase had a good sight of him,—a stocky, red-faced, smooth-shaven man of fifty, in great riding-boots and a leather coat.

“Here, Robin Smith,” the man cried in a big voice, “set this off shoe again, ye rogue! Briskly now!”

He would have pushed into the smithy, but Garford thrust himself forward and blocked his way. “Bide a moment, sir,” he drawled. “Master Darrell’s horses must have their turn first at the forge.”

The red-faced man wheeled on him. “‘Must,’

quotha? '*Must?*' O' my word, the knave speaks roundly! I know ye, sirrah,—a cast trooper, a malignant, a ruffian that Henry Darrell maintains to annoy decent folk. And you come here with your '*must*'! You—what are you to gainsay a gentleman?"

At this loud tirade Gervase had edged back to the door-post, but Garford held his ground with his hands on his hips. "I never gainsaid a gentleman yet, Yeoman Dunch," he answered point blank.

For a moment Gervase thought that the red-faced man meant to strike Sander with his heavy riding-whip, but instead the man swallowed in his throat, and drew back a step. "D'ye know," he said dryly, to Garford, "you've a neck would become the hangman's noose mightily, you barn-burner. Ay, and I'll live to see the noose about your throat."

"If it comes to that, I'll 'scape drowning, sir," Garford answered steadily, but the red-faced man had already swung into his saddle again, and headed his limping horse up the road.

"Whew!" whistled Garford, as if a bad business were over, and turned to Gervase. "Did you mark him, master?" he said. "Well, that was Isaac Dunch."

CHAPTER XV

OUT OF BOUNDS

BESSIE was tidying the north parlor, and Gervase sat in a big chair, with his legs dangling, and watched her. He felt quite content. He had finished his morning tasks, and he had coaxed the cook-maid to give him a piece of bread with honey on it. He held the bread in his hand, and, while he watched Bessie, ate round the edges with luxurious, slow nibbles.

The casements of the parlor stood wide to the sweet June air and the morning light, and for the first time Gervase was able to take in each detail of the seldom-used room. He noted the carved wooden chimneypiece above the fireplace, and the Turkey covering with gold threads through it that was spread upon the table, and then he let his eyes wander to the portraits that hung upon the wall. He wondered what the people in those pictures had done that they should be banished to the gloomy north parlor. Most of the portraits of his

ancestors — so Dame Greenwood called the gentlemen in pointed doublets and the ladies with monstrous ruffs — hung without in the great hall.

“Who are the people in those pictures, Bessie?” asked Gervase. Then he was sorry that he had spoken, for he remembered that he and Bessie had quarrelled ten minutes before because he had tramped through one of the neat piles of dust that she had swept up.

“What’s who?” snapped Bessie. “Why, yon in the white satin is poor Mistress Darrell as she looked when she married the master. Yes, and there between the windows ’tis your own father’s picture hangs, and done to the very life, they say, though I know not, for I never set my eyes on him. ’Twas before my time. And here above the fireplace ’tis little Master William. I remember him, ’deed I do, bless his dear good little heart!”

Gervase swung about in the big chair and stared at the portrait over the fireplace. It was the portrait of a little boy with yellow hair, who wore a plumed hat and held a ball in his hand. “Who was that boy?” demanded Gervase. “Did he use to live here?”

“Live here? Surely, yes,” sniffed Bessie. “’Tis Master Henry’s own little son William that died

three year ago last Christmastide. And it nigh broke his father's heart too."

Gervase lost interest in his bread and honey. "Did Mr. Darrell let him have a dog?" he asked jealously. "Did he love that boy?"

"To be sure," Bessie answered mercilessly. "He was a sweet little gentleman, and everybody loved him. He never broke the kitchen window with a stone-bow, nor spilt ink over poor Master Henry's papers. *He* was a good little boy."

Gervase kicked the leg of his chair, and drew his dark brows together. "I hate good little boys," he said. He scowled fiercely at the smiling little lad in the plumed hat, but he saw him mistily through tears. So Henry, who was cold and stern to him, had loved this other boy and petted him. "I wouldn't *be* a good little boy," Gervase cried aloud. "I take it *he* never ate bread and honey, nor got his fingers sticky, nor spilt the honey on the Turkey carpet."

Before Bessie could answer, Gervase sprang from his chair and flung his bread, honey down, on the fine table-cover. "There!" he cried, and ran out of the parlor.

In the east window of the hall the tabby cat, Bion, lay dozing in lordly security. "Scat!" cried

Gervase, and slapped the creature's head as he ran past. He felt that he hated the cat because it belonged to Henry, who had liked the other boy—the good boy—and did not like him.

But after Gervase was out in the garden he remembered how Bion begged prettily for bread, and was wont to rub about him in friendly fashion. And now he had hurt Bion, so that doubtless the cat would never come to him again. Gervase could have cried at the thought. Nobody, not even the cat, would ever love him any more.

The enormous sense of his own wickedness was Gervase's only comfort, and he hugged it to him. As he went slowly down the walk to the garden gate, he sang in a sort of chant—it was the wickedest thing he could think of to do at the moment—all the bad words that Henry had forbidden him to use: "Thief! King-murderer! Hangman! Cromwell's dog!"

Still chanting softly, he sauntered past the stable, where Garford called to him, but he pretended not to hear, past the horse pond, where he kicked some stones into the water, till at last he reached the spot toward which his steps had tended—the stile that went over into Major Dunch's park. On the top of the stile he seated himself, with his elbows

on his knees and his chin in his fists, and stared down the footpath beneath the green trees.

So Henry had cared for that other boy. How the thought tortured Gervase! While he had believed Henry cold and indifferent to all people, he had not fretted at Henry's neglect of him. But Henry was not cold to every one; he had loved that other boy. "Why doesn't he love *me*?" poor Gervase wondered. All the pangs that the rejected suffer gnawed at his heart.

Suddenly Gervase stamped his foot down on the stile. "I do not *wish* Mr. Darrell to like *me*," he repeated fiercely. He would never try to please Henry again as long as he lived, he vowed. He would never be good, like the odious boy in the picture. Good? Gervase did not believe that boy was good. Very likely he pulled the cat's tail on the sly. But Gervase would not go sneaking about his mischief. He would show Henry—he would show him! He would do the wickedest thing possible, the thing that Henry had most earnestly forbidden him to do.

"I will go down into Major Dunch's park," Gervase said, in a low voice, almost frightened at his own boldness. "I will go down—yes, and I will step off the path."

Without waiting for his resolution to cool, Gervase scrambled down on Major Dunch's side of the stile. Intentionally he landed beyond the edge of the beaten footway and rolled over in the short grass. The trespass was accomplished. Gervase lay on his back and stared up into the leafy tree-tops, where the sun was filtering through. A squirrel came leaping and gazed down at him with twinkling bright eyes, and a spear of grass tickled his cheek as he lay. But nothing else happened. He had disobeyed Henry, he had trespassed on Major Dunch's land, and still the sky had not fallen.

The zeal for wickedness died out of Gervase. He forgot Henry and the beloved little good boy, and he remembered only that the sunny hours of noontime were before him and not a quarter-mile away ran the brook. Now that the first step was safely taken, he had lost his fear of Major Dunch. He sprang to his feet and ran light-heartedly down the path. As often as he thought of Henry, he took pains to run on the grass alongside the beaten way, where he had no right to step, but most of the time he kept to the path, where the going was easier.

Soon the path grew dark with shade and sloped

downward. From before him Gervase heard a liquid gurgle, and between the rough tree-trunks he caught the flash of sunlight on running water. Next moment he stood on the margin of the brook. It was not Sunday, and there was no Brother Henry to hinder. Down squatted Gervase on the biggest stepping-stone and set a piece of bark to sail in the little pool that eddied beside it. He felt the water deliciously cool upon his hands, and he counted the white pebbles on the sandy bottom. He took up a handful, wetting his sleeve to the elbow as he did so, but the white pebbles did not look so white and shiny when they were out of the water. They were not worth treasuring, so he threw them as far as he could upstream, and listened for the faint splash with which they met the water.

Presently Gervase remembered the minnows, so, rising from the stone, he passed over the brook and down the path to the sandy shallows where he had lingered so often. There were the coveted minnows, glancing and darting in the sunlight, but when he put his hand into the water to take them, they flashed away downstream.

Gervase followed after. He came to a clump of elder bushes, where he broke off a switch with

which to lash the stream. He liked to send the water sparkling into the air. Wrapped up in this new sport, he wandered on till he came to a copse of alders so dense that he could not force his way through it. He must either turn back or cross the brook to the open bank opposite.

Gervase held himself a careful boy in that, ere he ventured into the water, he took off his shoes and stockings and rolled up his breeches. It was well that he did so, for in midstream the water was knee-deep. He was almost afraid of it at first, but soon he was used to the swirl of it against his legs, the cool of it upon his bare flesh. He paddled to and fro till his feet were chilled, and then he sat down on the grassy bank to draw on his shoes and stockings.

He found now that he was rather tired. It must be drawing toward dinner-time, and he had shown Henry that he did not mean to obey him, and he had had a good play in the brook, and he thought that now he would go home. With this intention he rose to his feet, and, after stamping once in his damp shoes, scrambled up the bank. There he came face to face with a lean, sunburnt man in a faded green jerkin. .

"Good morrow," said Gervase, civil but terrified.



"He came face to face with a lean, sunburnt man in a faded green jerkin."



On the sudden he remembered red-faced Major Dunch with his loud, threatening voice and his heavy riding-whip.

"Good morrow to *you*," grinned the man in the green jerkin. "I take it, master, you'd best come make your compliments to the Major himself." His hand closed on the boy's arm.

Gervase's lip began to quiver. The park looked vastly big and hostile, and the grip of the man in green hurt his arm. "Prithee," he said, "I must go home to my dinner."

His captor laughed outright. "Major Dunch will give you something you'll remember longer than dinner, my young cock," he said.

CHAPTER XVI

AFTERWARD

FOR twenty mortal minutes, that seemed as many hours, Gervase sat on a hard form in the hall of Wardington manor-house and waited till Major Dunch should be ready to attend to him. Servingmen, a frowzy lot, grooms, footmen, for-esters, and a tittering wench or two strolled in and looked at him. "The poor little heart!" said one woman, but the men chaffed him.

Gervase saw nothing funny in his position. With wide-eyed alarm he looked about him. For days thereafter he remembered with nightmare clearness the high, vaulted roof, the smoky, deep fireplace, the narrow, mullioned windows of the hall, even the way in which the light fell in dusty patches on the dark old floor. Still, for all his terror, he did not whimper. Stiffly erect, with one hand in his pocket and the other clenched beside him, he met with a steady face the curious looks and grins of Dunch's household.

"No doubt the Major'll have ye hanged, master, for poaching on his lands," said the green-coated keeper who had captured him.

"I do not believe you," said Gervase, and added, "I'm not afraid of any Roundhead."

The men laughed, and then were struck sober as Gervase himself, for a door at the upper end of the hall clanged open, and Major Dunch came striding into the room. "About your business, you rascals!" He sent his men scudding in the same loud voice that Gervase remembered. He wore the same leather coat, too, and the great riding-boots. "Off with my boots, Giles, you knave!" he bade, and flung himself down in the great chair by the fireplace. "Now then, Morris, this is the young rogue you told me of?"

Gervase shrank back on the form. A moment before he had feared the green-coated keeper as his chief persecutor; but now he thought of the man as a friend, and hoped wildly that somehow he would shield him from Dunch. He groped with one hand, in the hope of touching the keeper's sleeve, but without looking at the man, for he dared not take his eyes away from Dunch's face.

"Come over hither, sirrah," bade Dunch, and Gervase went, because the keeper shoved him,

but he halted at a careful arm's-distance. Dunch had off his boots by now, and sat in his gray woollen stockings. One of his men had just fetched him a flagon of small beer, and he took a long draught and wiped his lips ere he turned to Gervase and looked him up and down.

The boy stood his ground, and, if his eyes were frightened, at least he did not lower them before the Major's frowning gaze.

"My word!" said Dunch, and took up his flagon again. "By the saucy port of that younker I'd know he came of the Darrell blood, even if I met him in Tartary." Then he clapped down the flagon, and said sharply, "So you've been trespassing on my land, they tell me, sirrah. D'ye know what I do with lads that trespass? I lock 'em down in my lower cellar where the rats are."

Gervase liked rats as little as he liked the dark, but he felt vaguely that if he cried it would gratify the Roundhead soldier. "You'd better not lock *me* down in your old cellar," he said, in a scared voice. "If you do, my Brother Henry'll make you sorry." At that moment he felt a real affection for that stern Brother Henry.

The mention of Henry's name seemed to change the current of Major Dunch's thoughts. He sat

a moment, with his thick brows meeting, and rubbed his chin—he had not shaved that morning—with one hand. Then he broke into a laugh. “Fetch me ink, pens, paper and all, you, Giles,” he cried. “I’ll write a letter to Brother Henry. Sit you down, young Master Darrell, till it’s drawn.”

Thankfully, Gervase reseated himself on the hard form, and, at that discreet distance from the Major, watched the process of drawing up the letter. The Major seemed to find the task pleasant, for he screwed up his lips and chuckled all the time that he was writing.

“Go saddle a horse, Morris,” he bade at last, and flung the folded letter down upon the table. “Convey that writing and this young whelp here into the hands of Mr. Darrell. And you, you little knave,” he turned to Gervase, “bear in mind that if I catch you breaking through my woods again, I’ll cut off your ears.”

As in the case of the other threats that had been showered upon him, Gervase was doubtful if this dreadful promise would be carried out. He hardly thought Major Dunch would dare interfere with his ears, but still the Major might change his mind and do so, even now. On the whole, Ger-

vase felt relieved when he found himself, safe and sound and with both ears intact, mounted on a raw-boned nag before the keeper, Morris, and headed back to Southurst.

"An he'd not been in a good temper, master, the Major'd 'a' hanged ye, for sure," the keeper repeated; but Gervase, who had decided that the man was friendly, only laughed at this and chattered to him of the sights of the highway, much as he would have chattered to his friends in the kitchen at Southurst.

It chanced that almost the first sight that met Gervase's eyes when he and Morris turned into the main highway was Sander Garford, pounding along in his shirt sleeves on one of the stable hackneys. Gervase waved his hand. "Where are you going, Sander?" he piped.

The stableman pulled up at his side. "A pretty to-do you've made, master," he grumbled, but there was relief in his tone. He wheeled about and rode in Gervase's train, but he and Morris did not exchange a word.

As Gervase drew nearer to Southurst, he met, man by man, Praisever Simkin, and Roge, the stableboy, and the gardener; and they, too with exclamations of mingled indignation and relief, fell

in behind him. Once again he had a pleasant sense of being a person of importance. He rode up to the door of the house with the mien of a conqueror rather than that of a prisoner brought home in disgrace.

Gervase and Morris had but little time to wait in the hall. Scarcely were they over the threshold when Henry came out from the parlor, close-lipped and steady-eyed as ever. Gervase made a movement to go to him, but Henry checked him with a sharp gesture and turned to Morris.

"A letter, sir," said the keeper, and held it out, while he struggled with a grin.

Henry opened the letter and read, with never the change of a muscle. "Stay for an answer," he said. "Take this man to the kitchen, Simkin, and see that he has to drink."

When the servants had quitted the hall, Henry spoke one curt sentence to Gervase: "Go to my closet and await me there."

"I haven't had my dinner, if it please you," hinted Gervase. He wished to tell his morning's adventures to some one, and, failing a better audience, he had rather looked forward to detailing them to Henry across the dinner-table.

But Henry repeated, "Go to my closet!" in so

stern a voice that Gervase thought it well to obey. After all, he had never been bidden into that room before, and he was a little curious to see what it was like.

Henry's closet proved to be much like other rooms. The windows gave the same view of lawn and orchard as did the windows of the south parlor, and the cupboard and the table drawers were close shut, so that Gervase could find nothing to look at or to handle. In the end he curled up on the window-seat and amused himself with thinking of the merry time that he had had that morning. He had been a brave boy, he decided proudly.

While Gervase made these pleasant reflections, it was with anything but pleasure that Henry Darrell, in the parlor below, re-read Major Dunch's letter. A dozen differences of religion, of politics, of upbringing, made the two men hostile. On the Major's side there was bristling, baffled enmity; on Henry's side fine, cool contempt. So it was gall and wormwood to Henry now, reading that sarcastic letter, to reflect on the morning's occurrences. Gervase, by his deliberate trespass, had put his guardian and kinsman in the wrong, and, worse, had forced him to receive favors at his opponent's hands. For one bitter moment Henry almost

wished that the Major had held to his legal right, and carried the boy before a justice, instead of forgiving him in such contemptuous phrase.

As the only way out of a wretched business, Henry wrote a cold, civil letter of thanks to the Major and sent it by Morris's hand. Then he returned to the parlor and sat down to Read's *Treatise on Chirurgery*. He was going to punish Gervase,—he had determined upon that the moment that he realized the full extent of the lad's disobedience,—but, in the temper to which he knew that he was now wrought, he dared not lay hand on the child. So for two full hours Henry Darrell read the *Treatise on Chirurgery*, till he felt that he was as cool and self-contained as it became him to be. He capped the *Chirurgery* with a chapter of Proverbs, and then he went out into the hall and selected him a supple riding-switch.

Meantime Gervase, tired even of recalling the day's heroic achievements, had ranged round the closet in search of amusement and had come upon a big folio volume that told about Virginia. For all that Gervase knew or cared Virginia might lie on the other side of the moon, but still, so desperate was he for amusement, that he opened the book gingerly, and he opened it to the picture of a

savage man with feathers on his head. After that Gervase was drawn to look further, and he found that there were maps in the book, with pictures of dolphins and ships and strange, savage huts. He laid the book on the floor for his greater convenience, and laid himself on his stomach before it. He puzzled over the pictures and even spelled out some of the text, but it told him little that he wished to know. And here, in this bookish matter, he doubted if his friend Sander Garford could help him. He almost thought that he should have to ask Henry about those pictures.

Just at that moment the door opened, and Henry stepped into the closet. He carried a riding-switch. Gervase noted the switch carelessly, and wondered why his brother brought it there. "Mr. Darrell—" he began, and sat up on the floor, with the questions about the book right at his tongue's end.

Henry came and stood over him. "What were you doing on Major Dunch's land?" he asked in an even voice. "I forbade you to go there. Do you remember?"

Gervase nodded.

"Why did you go?"

Gervase hung his head and drew his fingers

along the edge of the book which lay beside him. "Because I wished to," he muttered at last, a little shamed.

Henry took him by the arm and raised him to his feet. "To teach you not to follow your own inclinations next time," he said dryly, "I shall whip you now."

"Whip me?" repeated Gervase. A connection between himself and the riding-switch had never entered his head.

Henry wasted no words in answering, but then and there gave Gervase his first thrashing. To Henry's credit, it was not a hard one. Ten blows, he had decided, were what the boy's age and offence required, and ten blows, neither more nor less, were laid deliberately across Gervase's legs.

The boy neither cried nor struggled. Stark amazement held him dumb. Only when it was all over and Henry's grasp taken from his collar, did he make a movement. With his blazing eyes always on his brother's face, he backed to the door and fumbled behind him for the latch. "You—you knave of a Roundhead!" he said, chokedly. "Jack never hit me. He loved me."

He turned his back then, and, pushing open the door, ran down the corridor. There was a

little dark flight of stairs at the back of the house, and down these he stumbled. They landed him at the door of the scullery, and Bessie, who was talking with the scullery wench, heard his step. Her conscience was a little uneasy, perhaps, for the tales that in her exasperation she had borne to Mr. Darrell earlier in the day. "Master Gervase, dear, what's happened?" she cried. "Come eat your dinner."

Gervase tugged at the fastening of the big outer door and paid no heed.

"Why, where do 'ee think to go, sweetheart?" coaxed the girl.

Gervase had the door open now. "I'm going away," he cried. "I'm going back to Jack Careless." With that word he ran out of the house.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FUGITIVE

LEVEL and dusty, the great London road ran toward the paling east. Gervase hurried along it, trotting heavily, for all that his brother's house, hidden by the trees of the plantation, lay well behind him. The white dust rose in spiteful puffs about his shoes, and presently one of his garters broke and his stocking came slipping down. "Plague on it!" wailed Gervase, and then — what he had not done for the whipping — began to cry.

But he would not halt even for his tears. Instead, he panted the faster along the road, and, as he ran, jerked up his stocking with one hand and with the other wiped his streaming eyes. The dust, rising thick, got into his nose and mouth so that he coughed and sobbed in a woful medley; but still he kept on, with his back to Southurst and his face toward London and the sea and the distant town of the Hague.

In the east the moon was three-quarters up the

sky. A bleached, unkempt moon it looked by daylight. Gervase did not remember to have seen such a moon before, but all the happenings of that day were impossible; that the moon in its turn should defy the order of nature was only fitting.

It was unknown country through which Gervase was passing. Once, on the way from London weeks before, he had ridden along that road, but he kept only hazy memories of the last hours of that journey. The copses and dark thickets, where he caught strangling breath in the fear that he would never win through to free daylight, the stretches of sunny field, the distant thatched roofs of a hamlet seen across the open, — all were new to him. At moments a half-frightened interest in the strangeness of the place and of his circumstances made him trudge more slowly and gaze about him; then the recollection of his miseries would sweep back on him and with a fresh burst of weeping he would run on again.

He crossed a rude bridge above a brook where some older boys were bathing. They shouted at him, and one tried to spatter him with water as he passed. He thought it well to quicken his pace, and more than once he glanced back to make sure that those unfriendly lads were not following him.

But Gervase saw no one on the highway till a full hour later; then, when the trees made long black shadows by the roadside, he met a little group of husbandmen returning from the fields. He gave them the lion's share of the road, and they passed him with no more than a stupid stare,—all but the last man. He, younger and quicker witted than his fellows, noted the little stranger, with his tousled, bare head and his clothes that, for all the dust, were neatly made and of good cloth. "Who be ye, master?" he turned back to ask. "Ye ben't running away, be ye?"

Gervase's heart stood still. "No," he faltered, "I'm going of an errand. I mustn't stay, sir."

"Be ye cooming, Jock?" called one of the other men. The ploughboy nodded; after all, 'twas no business of his to stop a well-spoken lad on the highway. He turned away whistling, and Gervase made off at his best speed.

The air grew cooler as the sun sloped down to the west. Even on the open reaches of the white road the heat no longer gave Gervase discomfort. Still, for all the coolness, he began to feel tired, so that presently, on the crest of a little hill, he sat down under some bushes and tried to patch his

broken garter with a bit of string. All below and around him, the country lay peaceful in the sunset glow. Here and there a thick clump of tree-tops or the distant roof of some great house caught the last horizontal rays of the sun, but the pastures and the cornfields and the little nestling hamlets and the low meadows were already in shadow, and the road that wound among them was no longer dazzling white, but soft gray.

Then, as Gervase glanced back along the road by which he had come, he spied a man plodding up the hill. He scarcely thought that Henry, who whipped him, would send to retake him; but, on the chance that he might do so, he thought it wise to roll under the bushes, deep in behind the leafy, low branches, and lie motionless.

The man came shuffling up the hill,—a squat, ill-favored man, with a bundle on his back. He was muttering under his breath—swearing, indeed. Gervase was presently able to make out the words, for the man stopped right opposite him, and then, to his terror, sat down at the other side of the road. When he had grumbled his fill against the heat and the dust and the weary road, he took from his pocket a hunch of bread and a lump of cheese, on which he made a leisurely supper. He cut the

cheese with a knife which he took from his belt, a broad-bladed knife, that glanced in the last of the sunlight. Gervase watched the knife with breath indrawn. The man wore a black patch over one eye, but the other eye was bright enough, and Gervase felt that it must surely pierce through the leafy screen to the place where he cowered. But when the bread and cheese were eaten, the one-eyed man stuck his knife into his belt, shouldered his bundle, and, rising to his feet, turned, not toward Gervase, but eastward along the London road.

For long minutes after the man had shuffled away through the dust Gervase crouched among the bushes. His side ached with keeping one position, and his hand was sore with pressing upon the harsh gravel, but still he lay motionless till he felt assured that the sinister man with the knife must have passed out of sight. Then he crept to the edge of the highway, and, after peering forth cautiously, rose to his feet and scudded down the hill in the direction opposite to that which the man had taken. He had remembered that at the foot of the hill he had seen a lane, that bent away from the highroad. He would go by that lane now; perhaps in time it would bring him to a road that led

to London, and in any case—that was his main concern—it would take him out of the path of the one-eyed man.

Alongside of the lane grew a hedge of hawthorn, and the leaves brushed Gervase's face as he passed. By now the pallid moon was clear and yellow, and the light sifted through the hawthorn boughs and fell in little patches upon the rugged ground. Gervase kept his eyes on the bright spots and walked fast through the shadows. From before him he heard the bark of a dog. He started at the sound, but then he hurried forward gladly. Where there was a dog, there would be a house.

Sure enough, the lane brought Gervase speedily to a barred gate, and on the other side of the gate lay a thrifty barnyard and a huddle of outbuildings and a stout farmhouse. Here was what he had hoped to see, but with sudden shyness he stood hesitating. He was afraid to go forward among strange folk, but he was even more afraid to retrace his steps down the lane, where all the time it grew darker, to the lonely highway.

While Gervase hesitated, peeping through the bars of the gate, he saw a woman in a white apron come up a little path beyond the house, and head toward the open door. So comfortable and kindly

did she look, that on the impulse he scrambled through the gate, and went toward her across the moonlit yard. "Good even, mistress," he greeted her. "Would it please you to be so kind as to give me a drink o' water?"

At the sound of his voice the woman started, turned about, and stared at him. "Lackaday! Who are you, child?" she asked. "What brings you out bareheaded this time o' night?"

"They have sent me of an errand." Gervase repeated his old excuse.

"And whither now?" she urged. "And whence did you come?"

"I wasn't to tell," Gervase replied, abashed. He had half a mind to retreat from the yard, but beyond the gate the fields looked vast and lonely, and he realized now that he was tired and hungry too. He sat down on the door-stone and gave his stocking a tug. "I'll rest a little, if it like you," he said.

He felt that the woman was eyeing him closely, but she asked him no further questions, as he had feared that she would do. So presently he mustered courage to make an inquiry. "How far is it to—to Wardington village?" He thought himself very shrewd in that he made no mention of Southurst.

"Are you going thither?" questioned his hostess. "Why, child, 'tis five miles and something more by the highway. There is a path through the fields, to be sure, that crosses the wood where Broughton Grange used to stand. But you couldn't find the path in the dark. You're not going thither to-night."

"No," Gervase assented listlessly, and rubbed his hand along one aching leg.

"Wouldn't you be liking a noggin of milk?" the woman proffered. "And a slice of bread?"

"And — and honey?" Gervase asked promptly.

The woman laughed. "You shall have it," she said. "Stay you here like a good lad till I fetch it."

She passed into the house, and for a moment Gervase listened with pleased anticipation to the sounds within. He heard the sand on the kitchen floor creak under swift steps, then the clatter of the buttery door, the rattle of dishes. Ah, how good that bread and milk would taste! Then he realized that the sounds within the kitchen had ceased. He could not know that his hostess had gone down into her cellar to get him a mug of cold milk, and he grew uneasy at the delay and the silence. Once he had trusted the Paulet man, and the Paulet man had betrayed him. Perhaps this kind-seeming

woman would do the like ; perhaps she had guessed who he was, had sent word to Henry while she kept him waiting there, and presently would bring Henry to seize him.

Gervase clenched his fists. "I *won't* go home!" he muttered. He sprang to his feet, and, as noiselessly as a little shadow, ran across the yard and down the wooded slope that lay beyond. The woman came to the door and called to him, but now he feared her as thoroughly as if he knew her to be an ally of Henry, and at the sound of her voice he ran the faster. He panted through a black grove, and when he came out again into the hazy moonlight, he could see shimmery fields and shadowy clumps of trees, but never a sign of the farmhouse. Straightway he was sorry because he could not see it. He thought of the bread and honey and milk for which he was so hungry, and he thought of the woman who would be disappointed because he had not stayed, and then he thought how lonely he was, and how nobody seemed, after all, to care whether he ran away or not. Just there he had to make an end to his sorry reflections, for he stepped into some soft ground, and the chill water came oozing into his shoes.

In the end Gervase ploughed through the swamp,

since there was no one to help him, but when he stepped on the firm ground at the farther side he found in him a new resolution. "I'm going back to Southurst," he said aloud, to the trees about him. Of course, he realized that one could not go to the Hague with wet feet and a broken garter and no hat. He would go home and sleep in his own comfortable bed, and then in the morning he would put on his best clothes, and beg cook to give him some bread and meat, and he would start fairly all over again. But now the main thing was to get home to his bed, and, after all, that was not such a great distance to go. It was less than five miles to Southurst, so the woman at the farm had told him, and Southurst lay, he guessed, over there on his right hand.

In that direction Gervase headed, at as brave a pace as his tired legs could muster. He could find no path in the fields, and indeed he did not trouble to seek one, for every moment he thought to reach the highway that he had quitted. He looked eagerly for it; he disliked the great lonesome fields. Clumps of bushes grew here and there about him, and he dared not look at them closely lest he see something peeping over the top at him. He walked swiftly, breathing rather short, and

never glanced behind him. At first there were patches of moonlight on the ground that cheered him with their brightness, but speedily they went blinking out as he came in among thick trees. Luckily he chanced here upon a path, and, in the choking terror of the darkness, he raced down it with his hands out before him. The branches snapped at his face, and his footsteps made a hideous loud noise.

Breathless with terror, he burst out into an open place, and there stood bewildered. It was a spot that he had never seen before. The lush weeds came to his knees; a heap of stones tripped him; and yonder, across the open, with their tips black against the blue night sky, the thick trees began again. "Where shall I go?" Gervase whimpered. "Where? Where?"

A black thing with leathery wings came swooping by him. It almost grazed his face. With a frightened cry Gervase leaped aside and stumbled a blind step through the weeds. Then the ground went from under him. His hands, flung up to save him, gripped the air, his back burned with sudden pain. Above him the bright sky was streaked and crumpled, and around him, with appalling rattle, stones were sliding, and he, too, was sliding helplessly down and down.

CHAPTER XVIII

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PIT

THE stones had stopped falling, and the sky was still above Gervase, though it was streaked with shoots of white light. He sat up on a heap of gravel, and for a moment rubbed his head bewilderedly. He was still alive, he comprehended, but he rather thought that his back was broken; at any rate it smarted so that he blinked his eyes with the pain.

Then, as the sky grew clearer to his sight, he gazed about him and with blank dismay realized what had happened. He had fallen into the pit of an old cellar. On either hand and before him, the walls rose sheer above his head, and at his back, as he saw when he turned, the broken wall down which he had fallen was far too steep for him to scale.

None the less he scrambled to his feet with some thought of clambering from the cellar, but he had not taken one step when a twinge of pain darted

through his left ankle, pain so keen that it fairly turned him faint. He dropped down again on the ground and laid his hand gingerly upon the throbbing flesh. "I must 'a' broke my leg," he whined. "Oh, dear!"

Indeed, he had good cause to say "Oh, dear!" An older lad than he might well have been alarmed at the prospect. Not only was he trapped, he was crippled and helpless in the trap, and he saw not the slightest hope of aid.

With growing terror he looked about him. On the treacherous edges of the pit the weeds and the neglected flowers of what had once been a garden showed in dim masses against the shimmery sky. A little breeze was abroad, and it made the weeds stir with an eerie sort of life. Gervase gulped, and, drawing his eyes from the beckoning weeds, looked nearer at hand. Among the rank growth that cumbered the bottom of the cellar, he spied something bulky that was black as ink, and at the sight he started, quivering with terror. Next instant he saw that it was only a charred beam half hidden by the weeds. He knew then that his terror had been groundless, but none the less it had left him weak and nervous. Wherever he peered now he thought to see something fearful. In the centre of the pit

rose the half-ruined stack of a great chimney, and near it grew a thorn bush which wavered toward him in the breeze. He stared upon it till he trembled at the least motion of the thorn, but when he looked away he saw the peering, mocking weeds of the edge of the pit.

Gervase wrung his hands tight together and set his chattering teeth. "I'm not afraid of you, I'm not, I'm *not*!" he repeated, but the words choked in his throat. It was very still. Far off across the fields a goatsucker called, and a clod fell rattling into the cellar. Then again the night closed in—cold and bright and alertly silent, save for the little rustle with which the thorn bush stirred.

"I can see you, there behind the thorn bush! I'm not afraid of you!" Gervase cried aloud, and then cowered back, frightened by the mere sound of his voice in the stillness.

With the last remnant of his self-control Gervase turned his eyes away from the nodding thorn and the dusky corners of the pit, and stared up at the glimmering sky. At least the moon was bright and comforting. It would be looking down, now, that same moon, on Southurst, peering in at the window of Gervase's snug little chamber, and shining in, too, at a hundred other windows of

chambers where boys were tucked safely in their beds. A sense of utter loneliness swept over Gervase. Every one else was sheltered at this hour, while he lay out in the damp and the night, and no one cared.

Gervase felt now that he hated the glittering sky and the heartless moon that peered down upon him. He brought his gaze back to the thorn bush and the clumps of weeds that grew near him, and at that moment he made a fearful discovery. The cellar was darker even than before. He had not thought of such a calamity, but he realized now that the moon was setting. The black shadow cast by the western wall of the cellar was creeping farther and farther into the pit. Now it engulfed a little heap of stones, now it enfolded a single stalk of mullein that had stood silvery in the moonlight. Very soon the whole dismal cellar pit would lie in darkness.

For some moments Gervase sat dull, half stupefied, and watched the dreaded black shadow, like a wave, creep toward him. He heard the rustle of the thorn, the stir of the wind that seemed the stealthy tread of vague shapes of terror. He quivered with dread, and he knew that when the

moonlight, his one comfort, went out, that dread would be increased twentyfold. And the moonlight was going. The shadow was gaining upon him — gaining.

Gervase leaped to his feet. The gravel crunched beneath his shoes, and the pain, like that of a hot iron, pierced his ankle, but he heeded nothing. In a very frenzy of terror he screamed for help — screamed till his throat ached and his lungs seemed near to bursting. From the wood came back a little shrill echo, and the echo died away, and again the night was silent.

Gervase flung himself down on his face among the weeds and sobbed aloud. He had forgotten that a gentleman must never cry, that Thomas Hutton said only babies cried. He remembered only that he was a poor mite of a lost boy, whom every one had forgotten, out all alone under the unfriendly sky, and the dark was shutting in upon him. So for long minutes he lay sobbing, and while he sobbed, the darkness crept nearer him and nearer. When at last he lifted his head and looked about him with half-blinded eyes, he found that the black wave of shadow had even swept over the place where he crouched. High up on the eastern wall of the cellar lay a band of

pallid moonlight, but the rest was blackness. With the quiet of sheer despair he watched that last strip of light shrink narrower and narrower, till it was no more than a glint of brightness on the weeds at the mouth of the pit, till it faded away altogether. The sky was now black, pricked out with little sharp stars, and the ragged masses of weeds showed thicker black against it, and the cellar itself was a pit of darkness.

Shuddering, Gervase crouched down among the weeds. He cried no more, but a strong trembling passed through all his body, and now and then he moaned. He was afraid, sick and numb with unspeakable fear. One moment he peopled the unfathomable dark about him with the wild spectres of the nursery tales. Ghosts, goblins, will-o'-the-wisps, a hundred malignant demons, pressed upon him. He dared not uncover his eyes lest he see before him some hideous form; he dared not move a muscle lest the unholy rout hear and pounce upon him. By times his fear took more palpable shape. The darkness was to him alive, not with formless spectres, but with evil-doers of human kind — the robbers and murderers who made their hiding-place in old ruins such as this cellar pit. He thought to hear in the dark the approach of

a stealthy step, the rustle of garments as some one passed near him. He remembered the sinister, one-eyed man with the great knife, and at the remembrance he pressed his hands tight to his lips lest some outcry betray his whereabouts. But whether it were spectre or human being that he figured to be near him in the blackness, his fear was always the same—the agonized fear of the resistless, suffocating dark.

Gervase had no way of reckoning time. It was all blackness and great fear. But he must have crouched in the weeds many minutes, for his clothes were damp with the night dew and the ground was clammy against his bare hands, when at last there came to his straining ears a sound that was not the rustling of the wind. Far off in the wood rose a noise of whooping and calling, a terrible din that made his heart stand still. The noise came nearer and nearer. He heard voices, rising louder and louder, the clicking of horse hoofs, and then, peeping through his fingers, he saw against the black sky an awesome glow like the glow of fire.

Too stupefied with fear to reason, Gervase crawled a little farther in among the weeds, and, cowering flat, lay motionless. But he still could



“Next moment he felt a man’s arm about him.”

see the terrible red glow and he could hear the clamorous voices. "Here!" bayed one in the clearing right above him. "Here! Look you here!"

The red glow danced and wavered toward the end of the cellar where Gervase had fallen. The whole pack came shouting thither. Against the lurid light black figures moved at the mouth of the pit. A single voice broke through the clamor. "Gervase!" it called. "Answer, Gervase! Are you below?"

A torch was swung over the edge of the pit. The red light, flashing and quivering across the cellar, dazzled Gervase, but through it all he had a blurry sight of a man's figure scrambling, slipping, falling down into the pit. "Gervase!" the voice cried again, and upon it sounded the clatter of stones and the crunch of crisp weeds.

Gervase heard the sound, saw the red light wavering about him, and then with a little gasping outcry he shut his eyes. Next moment he felt a man's arm about him. "My poor little lad! There, there! Don't you know me?" spoke the voice right in his ear.

It was Henry's voice, Gervase realized at last. He opened his eyes heavily and looked up into Henry's face. "Did you come to find me?" he

whispered, and then he realized slowly that he was safe, out of the dark and in the hands of friendly human folk. He clutched at the front of Henry's doublet. "O Brother Henry," he murmured, "I'll forgive you—even though you did beat me. I'll forgive you, Henry."

CHAPTER XIX

A STORY IN THE TWILIGHT

THE little room with the wainscot of shiny dark oak and the latticed casement that looked to the east grew very familiar to Gervase in the weeks that followed. For one weary day after another he lay in his bed, white and languid and still. Not only had he given his ankle a cruel wrench in his fall, but, far more serious, he had suffered from the fright and exposure of the long hours in the open, so that he was brought to the verge of a deathly fever.

Even when that danger passed, Gervase was slow to gather strength again. He seemed to have lost all interest in living. If he could have a candle burning on the table beside him through the long night watches, he asked for nothing else. Hour after hour he would lie with his face toward the window and listlessly watch the strip of sky above the poplars, that changed from the pearly gray of dawn to the dazzling blue of high noon, and then to the soft green hue of eveningtide.

In all conscience the child was quiet and docile enough now to satisfy Henry Darrell, but Henry went about the house with an anxious frown graven between his brows. The agony of the search for the lost boy had taught him at last that Gervase was very dear to him. He knew now how hollow had been his assertions that he cared nothing for the child, that he was rearing him up only from a sense of duty. Each hour he missed his little brother—at mealtime, at lesson time, at evening, when Gervase had been used to lag into the parlor and read aloud his Psalm. At the moments when Henry missed Gervase most keenly, the thought would come to him, "What if I had lost him forever!" and the fear that even now he might lose him was a torture. He could not give Gervase up; he loved him far too well.

The pitiful part of it all was that Gervase, in his listless state, showed never a trace of affection for his brother. The hysterical joy with which he had clung to Henry on the night of his rescue had died away instantly, and the old fear had asserted itself. While Henry dressed the hurt ankle with tender care, Gervase wondered drearily if, as soon as he was well, Henry would whip him again for running away. When Henry gave him medicine, Gervase,

passive in his hold, swallowed the dose with a remembrance of the headache draught, and believed that it was given him by way of punishment. Henry was so big and strong, and always so set to punish him for everything! After all, Gervase thought that it was hardly worth while to get well.

It was this listlessness that most alarmed Henry, and, with senses quickened by his newly realized tenderness for the boy, he tried to rouse him. "Is there nothing I can get for you, Gervase?" he urged one morning. "Nothing that you desire?"

Gervase desired most of all that Henry should go away and leave him, but he could not well say so. He twisted the edge of the coverlet with his thin fingers and answered nothing.

Henry watched him, so pitifully slender and small beneath the coverlets, and with something like a pang recalled that time—almost the only time before this sickness—when he had come to Gervase's chamber to rebuke him, and had taken his puppy from him. "Gervase," he said abruptly, "would you like to have one of Echo's puppies now to divert you, here in your chamber?"

"I don't know." Gervase shook his head.

Dame Greenwood, who always fluttered anxiously near when the brothers were together, hastened to

make the offer more alluring. "I'm sure, sir, that Master Henry will let you have the puppy for your very own. And he will let you have the one you choose to name. Come, Master Gervase, wouldn't you like to have Wanton, all for your own? She shall lie here on the bed where you can stroke her."

"Yes, if you wish it," Gervase answered indifferently. But after a time he turned his eyes toward the housekeeper and added, "I'd liefer have Merri-man. And—and can't Sander Garford bring him hither and talk with me for a little time?"

At that stage of his illness Gervase could have had the moon for the asking, if Henry had been able to get it for him. Such a simple request as this that he had made,—only it would have seemed far from simple a month before!—Henry granted without an instant's hesitation. That very afternoon Sander Garford, stepping carefully lest his heavy shoes make too much clatter, brought Merri-man into the chamber and for some minutes talked to Gervase of the stable folk and the dogs and the horses. The talk heartened Gervase wonderfully. He showed some interest in Merriman's antics, and ate a few mouthfuls of supper after less than the usual persuading. He "hoped he might see San-

der Garford again," he told Dame Greenwood timidly, and she told her master.

Henry heard this good report of Gervase with mingled feelings. He was glad of any sign of awakening life in the child, yet he winced with bitter pain as he realized that his very grooms knew the way to Gervase's heart better than he knew it. Still, in this emergency he was not too proud to take a leaf out of Garford's book. If it was stable concerns that interested Gervase, why, he should have stable concerns to gratify him! A few days later, when Gervase's interest in his dog seemed flagging, Henry spoke of a purpose that he had formed.

"If you will make haste to get well, Gervase," he promised, "I will give you a little horse of your own that you may ride when it pleases you. And—and Sander Garford shall teach you to ride. Would you like that?"

"Yes, sir," assented Gervase. A faint flush of pleasure came to his pale cheeks, and then, at a sudden memory, it died away and his eyes grew wistful. "Jack always said he'd give me a horse," he murmured. "I wish he were here! When I had the earache, there at Beauvais, he used to tell me stories. Dame Greenwood, she only tells me babies' stories. But Jack, *he* used to tell me — *he*

knew—O Jack! I wish he were here!” He flung his arm about Merriman and hid his face against the dog’s neck.

Henry rose without speaking, and went to the window. Always Jack Careless! The best that he could do for Gervase, the boy weighed as nothing beside the remembrance of his old guardian’s mere crumbs of kindness. And if the boy’s devotion to Careless had stabbed Henry in the old days when only his jealous pride had been hurt, it stabbed him ten times as deeply now when his own love was slighted and put aside.

Without speaking further to Gervase, Henry quitted the room. On the stairs, Dame Greenwood met him and noted the look of pain on his face. A moment later, when she entered Gervase’s room, she understood. Gervase was talking aloud to his dog. “And Jack, he was always good to me. He never struck me. He—” Then, as he spied Dame Greenwood, Gervase became silent and feigned to pull the dog’s ears.

“Master Gervase,” the housekeeper asked quietly, “when will you ever learn to be friends with your brother? And he so kind to you!”

Gervase fixed his eyes on Merriman’s sleek head and made no answer.

Like a wise woman, Dame Greenwood did not press him further, but gave him his supper and straightened his pillows and made him comfortable for the night. Already Gervase seemed to have forgotten what he had said to his brother. He settled himself contentedly, turning his face toward the window where the sky showed golden with sunset glow. The casement stood open, and the air that came across the garden was heavy with the scent of honeysuckle.

Gervase drew a deep breath of satisfaction. "*Now*, tell me a story," he said.

For one moment Dame Greenwood bethought her, then she had made up her mind, and, sitting down by the bedside, she began. "Once upon a time there was a little boy—"

"Like me?" asked Gervase.

"Yes, a little boy whose mother died when he was a baby. And he lived in a great house in the country with his father and his older brother."

"Oh!" said Gervase, in a rather disappointed tone. The fathers and brothers complicated the tale.

"His brother was a towardly child, of a bold spirit and a handsome face, while the little boy was quiet and shy, and liked to creep away by himself

and read his book. So his father loved the older brother the better."

"Poor little boy!" murmured Gervase. The parallel between the unhappy little hero's case and his own was very clear. He pitied that neglected boy who saw others preferred before him.

"Ay, poor little boy!" repeated Dame Greenwood. "For he strove, in his shy fashion, to win his father's love, but 'twas no use. Well, well! the serving-folk of the household, they cared for him. He was a kind little lad, and they all loved him, indeed they did!" Her voice trembled, and for a moment she sat silent. "But when he was still a young lad, his father sent him away to school —"

"Oh!" said Gervase, with a shudder of sympathy.

"To a school beyond the seas. He cried when they sent him away, for he loved the old house in the country. But that was all to go to his older brother when the father died. That's the law of the land, my dear, and it's not for me to say that 'tis wrong, though sometimes it does seem hard that one should have all. But our lad went away bravely, and in those foreign parts he studied diligently, that he might be a good physician. And after that he dwelt in London for a long time.

'Twas seldom they saw him at his home. For there were troublous times in the country. Some men were for the king, and some against him, and at last it came to downright blows — Heaven pity us! And our lad's father said he was no son of his, for that he held to the opposite side. But the poor old father's side was after all the losing side. His older son that he loved was slain in battle, and he himself was banished out of the country.

“All this while, our lad had never drawn a sword for fear he might be pitted in the fight against his own kinsfolk, but he had gone with the rebel army as a surgeon, and so now, when the rebels seized upon his father's old house, they gave it to our lad. And then he besought his father to forgive him, and come back to England and dwell with him, but his father would not grant him even a word. Well, well! no doubt the sorrow and all had turned the old man's mind.

“But our lad had some love and happiness in his life at last. For in London he had come to know a fine young gentlewoman, a great merchant's daughter. Rose was her name, and she was sweet and pretty as a rose. He married her and brought her home into the country, and they had one little son. Dear heart! but those were happy times —

ah, too happy to last! The little boy that was his father's very darling fell ill and died of a malignant fever — his own father could not save him, and he a physician! And the poor mother, she was ill herself at the time, and the loss of her little son drove her mad.

“So our lad was alone again, in the house that his father would not share with him, and his little son dead, and his poor wife crazed. And then, Master Gervase, he heard how his father was dead in a far country and had left a little son, his own half-brother, and he planned how that little lad was to be to him what his own son that died would have been. Two years he searched for the little lad, and then he found him and brought him home — to Southurst.”

It was now quite dusky in the room. The old housekeeper could see only the dark mop of Gervase's hair against the pillow and the misty outlines of his white face. She could not see the expression of his features, but when he spoke at last she read his mood by his gruff tone, and judged that he was quite untouched.

“That's my brother you told me about,” he said.

“Yes, Master Gervase,” she answered. “Your

brother, Master Henry, and your poor father, and your other brother, Master Edward, that was killed at Newbury. I've told you truth, every word, sir. Can you not believe that your poor brother cares for you with all his heart?"

She spoke tremulously, but she got no answer, save the slight rustle with which Gervase turned himself. Face to the wall, he spoke to her in a hard little voice. "I'm weary. Prithee go. No matter for the candle."

With a heavy sigh the old woman went from the chamber. She had said everything that could appeal to the boy, and she felt that she had said it all in vain.

She would have felt comforted could she have glanced into the chamber a moment later. The instant she quitted the room, Gervase turned in his bed. "I'm sorry," he muttered.

A moment he lay quiet while he watched the darkening sky above the distant sheaves of the poplars, and harked to the little chirpings and rustlings of the summer evening. His mind ranged back over what had just been told him. He saw Brother Henry, a little neglected boy like himself, with a heart longing for the love that was denied him. He saw him going sadly away

to that place of torture, a school. He saw him marching with the rebel army, a martial man who had dwelt in camps, for all that he had never drawn a sword. Then he had a vague picture of Henry in the garden at the house-front, the garden that was a ruin now, with Mistress Rose, the lady of the portrait in the north parlor, the poor, pale ghost of a lady whom he had once seen tottering down the gallery on Dame Greenwood's arm. But in the vague picture Gervase saw her as she was in the portrait, young and beautiful, and the little boy was with her — the good little boy. Yet that eveningtide Gervase thought of little William without jealousy. The pity of it all was real to him at last. Young as he was, Gervase could remember the night at Beauvais when his father died. He knew the anguish of looking for the last time upon a face that he had loved. Henry, too, had loved his son, and had lost him, — and he had looked for his little brother to fill the dead boy's place.

One of those spasms of pity and repentance which Jack Careless had known so well swept over Gervase. "I'm sorry, oh, I'm sorry!" he repeated. "I wish to tell my brother so."

To wish to do a thing was with Gervase the next step to doing it. Without a moment's hesitation

he slid out of bed, and, tottering and unsteady, stood upon his feet once more. Then he reflected that his night-gear was hardly a fit costume in which to parade the house in search of his brother. His own clothes were put snugly away, but the coverlets were at hand and would serve his turn. Without ceremony he pulled Merriman from the bed, and, tugging off the uppermost coverlet, wrapped it about himself.

Dressed for the journey now, he crept toward the chamber door. His head was dizzy, and his knees knocked together, but by dint of clutching at the furniture and groping along the wall, he managed to reach the corridor, and then to stagger to the head of the staircase. The sight of the long flight of dusky stairs, plunging into the dark of the hall, fairly daunted him, but while he stood hesitating, dreading to venture down, he saw a broad rectangle of light fall upon the floor at the foot of the staircase. Henry must have lighted a candle in the parlor. He was there below, only the length of the staircase from Gervase.

With renewed courage Gervase gripped the balustrade and started down the stairs, but the end of the coverlet nearly tripped him, and Merriman crowded against him. The flight of stairs

seemed endlessly long, and the rectangle of light grew blurry. "Down, Merriman!" ordered Gervase, and put out his hand to push the dog away.

His feet seemed to go out from under him, and the stairs to rise up and hit him. A confused heap of boy, dog, and coverlet, he found himself sprawling at the foot of the stairs, and Henry, with a candle in his hand, was bending over him.

"Are you hurt, Gervase? Are you hurt?" Henry repeated.

Indeed, Gervase was sorely shaken and frightened, but he remembered what brought him there. "Brother Henry!" he whispered.

"The ankle's uninjured," said Henry, with hearty relief, as he looked up from a hurried examination. "But you must not prowl about the corridors in such fashion. You might have done yourself grave harm."

His voice was kind enough, but the words chilled Gervase. Of a sudden it seemed to him the absurdest thing in the world to pity that cold, severe man, to tell him that he was sorry for anything. He grew hot with shame at remembrance of what had brought him down the stairs,

and hung his head with so abashed an air that Henry feared he had spoken harshly to him.

So when Henry had carried the boy up the stairs and put him to bed again, he asked gently, "There is nothing that you want, Gervase? You had nothing to say to me?"

But the time for saying was now past. Gervase shook his head and looked away from his brother. "No, Mr. Darrell," he muttered. "I — I did want a drink. I got up. No, I had naught to say."

CHAPTER XX

RUMORS OF WAR

ODDLY enough, Gervase began to mend from the night of his escapade, though according to every theory he should not have bettered his lame ankle and his sickly body by his scramble down the stairs. But something of interest had come at last to rouse him. Now that he thought about it, he found that above all things he wanted that little horse that was to be all his own, and he longed to be well so that he might ride it. He often talked to Dame Greenwood about the horse, wondering what color it would be and whether it would be able to jump ditches, but he scarcely mentioned the subject to Henry. Indeed, he talked very little with his brother. Since he had learned Henry's story, he felt an even greater shyness and constraint in his presence.

But though Henry heard nothing from Gervase about the horse, he did not forget his promise. Just as soon as the boy was able to be dressed

again, he carried him down into the parlor, one bright morning, and seated him in the southern window. "There will presently be something that you may like to see," he told him.

Gervase guessed at once that it had to do with the promised gift, and, sure enough, before ten minutes had passed Sander Garford led a horse up to the southern window. It was a pretty dapple-gray with a pink streak on its nose, and it was no little toy horse, either, but a full-sized beast such as a man might ride. In a perfect quiver of delight Gervase leaned across the sill and stroked the soft pink nose. "The sweet horse!" he cooed. "And he's mine, and I can call him what I will. I'll call him Scot."

"Why Scot?" Henry asked idly.

"Because—because I like the name," stammered Gervase. He had been on the point of blurting out the true reason,—that Jack Careless's old horse, of which he had told so many stories, was called Scot,—but, with the first kind thought that he had ever had for Henry, he kept back what he knew would wound him. "No, I won't call him Scot, sir," he said presently, with his head hung down as if he were at fault. "I'll call him Gallant, for the horse my father had."

In the days that followed Gervase talked and thought of nothing but Gallant. To see the horse of a morning at the parlor window furnished him with discourse for hours, and he came back from his first trip to the stable fairly sick with excitement. But all the while he grew steadily stronger. The time came when he could go downstairs alone, with no fear of falling, even though Merri-man bounded beside him, when he could walk the paths of the garden between the Provence roses and the gooseberry bushes, when at last he could venture unaided across the lawn to the stable, where Gallant whinnied at the sound of his step.

Then, when the month of July was half over, came a blissful, sunny afternoon when Gallant was saddled, and Gervase, breathless with joy, was seated on his back. It was a decorous ride, that first one, no more than a slow amble down the path from the stable to the pond, with Garford walking at the horse's bridle. But other rides followed, longer each time, till at last Gervase, grown strong as in the days before his tumble, was able to scamper over all the countryside.

Garford went with him on these rides, and taught him how to sit his horse craftily, and

pointed out to him the byways and safe fords. He taught him also—but this was not a kind of instruction that was laid down in Henry's orders—the way to the Widow Profit's farm. Gervase was very ready to go thither when he found that the widow whom Garford was courting was identical with the farm-woman who, on the evening of his flight from Southurst, had offered him the bread and honey. He got the bread and honey now, and he learned, too, that there was a brook in the dell below the widow's house. Gervase used to paddle happily in the brook while Garford chaffed with the widow, and, because of the brook and the honey, he bore to Henry no tales of this secret wooing.

No doubt Henry would have found out the whole matter for himself and rated Garford sharply, had he not been paying rather less heed than usual to his young brother's movements. In that late summer of 1651 events were stirring in England that by comparison made household affairs seem small. Henry wrote and received many letters, asking and giving news, and twice a week, to the shameful neglect of Gervase's lessons, galloped off to Worcester town. From one such trip he returned with two guests,—his brother-in-law,

Mr. Anthony Hutton, from London, and Gervase's old enemy, Mr. Hutton's son Thomas.

"Go play, you two lads," Mr. Hutton bade testily, and handed Thomas over to Gervase's mercies, just as Henry, five months before, had delivered Gervase over to Thomas.

Gervase made the most of the opportunity. With his own dog at his heels and his own horse in the stable and every servant in the household at his call, he was a far different creature from the frightened little lad who in London had shrunk from Thomas Hutton's teasing. It was his turn now to be patronizing. "Yes, you may get upon my horse, Thomas," he said generously, as he showed off Gallant. "But you must not fret him with too tight a rein. He has a mouth of velvet, Garford says, and he is used to none but skilful riders. And you mustn't vex Echo, neither, else my Brother Henry'll make you wish you hadn't."

"Ho!" said Thomas, with a faint revival of spirits. "He whips you, doesn't he? Doesn't he now? I told you so!"

"He never whipped me but once," flashed Gervase. "And he isn't going to send me to school. You told me a monstrous fib, Thomas Hutton. I'm never going to school, just as I said."

It was not till next morning that Thomas plucked up heart and began to brag again, though less confidently. "Don't believe you've ridden on your old horse as far as I have. I've rid clear from London, and I'm going with my father into Shropshire. We're going to fetch my grandam to London. She's afraid, because she's a woman. Pshaw! the malignants wouldn't dare touch her. They don't durst fight even an old woman. They're rising in Lancashire, and a-marching down from Scotland too, but General Cromwell, he's behind them, and my uncle Denzil Hutton, too. They'll beat 'em into bench holes. One of our men can whip three Cavaliers."

"They can't neither," cried Gervase. "Captain Careless, he'd show you. He could whip six of your Denzil Huttons. He could —" and so on.

Garford had at last to come out from the stable and separate the two boys. But Gervase, with his small fists swinging like a windmill, and his small tongue going like a mill clapper, distinctly had the better of it.

Still, Gervase was troubled by what his guest had said, so, when Thomas and his father rode away with Henry that noon, he sought Garford with his questions. Were the Cavaliers really up

in arms? Were they marching down into England to set the king upon his throne?

Garford assured him that it was so. The Earl of Derby had risen in Lancashire, and a great army of Scotchmen was pouring over the border. The Cavaliers were sure to gain a mighty victory, and there would be good times in England once more. The ex-trooper was in high feather at the prospect, and went about whistling *When the King Enjoys his Own Again*.

Gervase went and sat in the garden and practised that loyal tune for an hour. He was just learning to whistle, and he made a shrill and dreadful noise, but it sounded pleasant to his ears. He felt too happy to be critical. His friends, his Cavalier friends, were coming into England. He wondered if Jack were with them, but he feared not. Jack had bidden him write to him at the Hague, so he was surely still in the Low Countries.

But Gervase's happiness received a rude shock when he went to share it with his friends in the kitchen. "Oh, don't 'ee make that fearful noise, master," entreated Bessie, as he strode in whistling; and the cook cried, "'Deed, I'm blithe that some one's glad that they're marching down upon us, they murdering thieves of Cavaliers!"

"No doubt they'll burn the house about our ears, as they burned Broughton Grange," sniffed Bessie. "That was the old cellar of the Grange where you had your fall, Master Gervase. You wait but a fortnight, with your *King Enjoys his Own*, and you'll see Southurst in just such case, and we all a-begging on the highway."

"I'm sure not," protested Gervase, in some alarm. "The Cavaliers are very honest gentlemen, and would not burn *our* house. And — and Sander Garford was a Cavalier, too, and he'll not let 'em."

"Garford?" said Bessie, in an acid voice. "Barn-burner!"

Gervase began to look more seriously upon the threatened invasion. There was a grim side to war, he realized, as he thought on the crumbled ruins of Broughton. And that grim side was brought home to him forcefully next day. For Henry Darrell, the old surgeon of the Ironsides, took down his sword and pistols and bade saddle his horse. "God willing, I shall be back in a fortnight's time," he said to his little brother. "I doubt if there be much work for me to do, but it is an hour when every honest man should show to which side he holds."

Then he kissed Gervase and cantered away with Simkin at his heels, and Gervase stood watching him go. This was war at last—the glorious war that had fed his imagination from his cradle.

Next instant all the fear and the tense action seemed to Gervase remote. The servants scattered to their tasks, and Bion dozed and purred on the window ledge, just as every day. Out in the garden the peaches on the wall were blushing ripe, and toward sunset the robins sang, and the stars came out above the poplar trees, as still and golden as ever. It was too fair and calm a world for war. Surely no enemy would ever set foot at Southurst. Henry had but ridden forth on another of his dull farming matters.

In the long summer days that followed Gervase rode his horse and played with his dog and teased Dame Greenwood for sweets, quite as he had done before his brother went away. There were no lessons now for him to learn; in that respect the war that called Henry from home was a positive boon. Gervase made use of the holiday to explore every corner of his brother's estate; but he did not venture into Major Dunch's ground, for all that the Major had ridden off to the war with his troop

of militia. One experience of trespassing was enough for Gervase. But he did lay a bold plan. He made up his mind to go to the ruins of Broughton Grange, and see for himself the cellar pit that in the darkness had seemed such a place of horror. He had a fancy that by daylight it would prove a capital place in which to play, and, moreover, he wanted to prove his courage by venturing thither. Since his illness he had had the hardihood to go to his bed without the bridge of stools, and now he sought to put this new-found bravery to a final test. He had already coaxed Garford several times to ride by the ruins of Broughton, but the bridle-path was overgrown, and Garford had refused. Now, though a bit fearful, Gervase determined to go there on foot and without Garford.

A proper morning came at last, a blue September morning with soft air and a clear sky. Gervase put on his stoutest shoes, and ran down into the kitchen to beg cook for bread and butter to carry with him on the expedition, but in the low doorway of the kitchen he stopped surprised. All the household were gathered there, from Dame Greenwood to the scullery wench and Roge the stableboy, and all were listening

wide-eyed and open-mouthed to Sander Garford. Early though it was in the morning, he had ridden to Wardington village and back. He was lathered with mud to the thighs, and his face was brick-red with hurry and excitement.

"Ay, 'tis Heaven's own truth!" Garford was declaring. "Yester-afternoon 'twas. Cromwell and his men came up wi' 'em at Worcester town. They cut 'em all to bits. The young king hath fled for his life, and there's never a handful of his army left in England this morn. The ways are full of Cavalier fugitives that 'scaped after the battle. But the militia are a-hunting 'em down. God pity 'em!"

One afternoon of fierce conflict, and now the king's crown was cast down again, and his followers were dead or hunted men. But while the grown folk in the kitchen stood gaping, half-realizing the momentousness of the news they had heard, Gervase thought of but two things, first, that if Jack Careless had been with the army it would not have been defeated, and second, that he was very thankful, after all, that now there was no danger of the Cavaliers burning Southurst.

Indeed, that was what the cook herself was saying at that very moment. She seemed so

glad that Gervase profited by this good-humored mood to pluck her sleeve. "If it like you," he coaxed, "may I have some bread — thick bread, and butter on it. I've a very important matter in hand to-day."

CHAPTER XXI

FROM SPORT TO EARNEST

GERVASE trudged stoutly through the dust of the London road. The thick bread and butter was in his pocket, the blue sky was over him, and great adventures were before him. As he walked he whistled in his shrill, discordant fashion, and when he heard a chaffinch singing in the hedgerow, tried vainly to mock the bird.

At the farther side of Black Brook, where weeks before the big boys had frightened him, he turned into the bridleway that Garford had told him led to the ruins of Broughton Grange. Few people passed by it in these days. Overhead the trees met, and long branches, stretching out into the path, plucked at Gervase. Far in among the tree-trunks he saw more tree-trunks still, and woven underbrush, — the endless green of leaves, and the gray of old trunks. Underfoot the ground was grassy and in places wet with rank moss. Always the path was very silent. Gervase glanced sharply to right and left, and at heart was glad when he

saw the sunlight bursting through the trees before him, and he came out into an open space of nodding brown grass.

But after the first step into the open he paused, half frightened. About him, with only the trees to watch them, lay the ruins of Broughton Grange. Three cellar pits yawned like huge traps in the grass, and, half hidden among the weeds, were charred beams that bore an ugly resemblance to crouching monsters. For a moment Gervase was half inclined to turn his back upon that sinister, quiet spot, and run home at his best speed. Then he looked up at the sky that was a clear, friendly blue, and he heard a robin piping in the dark woods.

"I'm not afraid," said Gervase, and, to prove his words, gave a shout and ran to the edge of the great cellar.

Yes, indeed, it was a capital place to play in by daylight. The ruined chimney-stack with the hawthorn bush beside it, the piles of stone, and the fallen girders, overgrown with plantain and woolly mullein leaves, furnished endless cuddies fit for robbers' caves and smugglers' dens. But Gervase had had enough of those old plays. This morning he would make up a new game; he would play he

was one of the defeated Cavalier soldiers of whom Garford had spoken. He had escaped the slaughter at Worcester, and now was fleeing for his life with the Roundhead militiamen hard on his heels. He would hide in the cellar from his pursuers. It was a thrilling game!

At the eastern end of the cellar was a slope only less steep than the sheer sides of the pit. Down this Gervase scrambled, almost forgetting to spare his ankle, so carried away was he by the new sport. Among the mullein stalks he found a slender stick that should serve him for a sword. Gripping it fast in his right hand, he crept softly across the cellar toward the western end, where the weeds were thickest. There he would hide from his enemies. He shot a glance over his shoulder. So strong was his fancy that he almost expected to hear the clatter of Roundhead cavalry and catch the glint of sunlight on steel corselets.

It was at that instant, while Gervase stood hesitating, half frightened by his own fancies, that a sudden sound broke the quiet of the pit. The sound came from the western end, an inarticulate outcry in a man's deep tones, which, as Gervase turned thither, shaped itself into words: "Ha' done, I tell you. I *will*!"

Right on the words the weeds were crushed aside and a man sprang to his feet—a tall young man with gray eyes. He came crashing across the cellar with the stones clattering under his boots, and he held out both hands as he came. “Gervase!” he cried. “Word o’ truth! You’ve not forgot me, laddie?”

At the first onset Gervase had dropped his “sword,” and taken to his heels a half-dozen paces through the rolling stones and the crackling weeds, but now he stopped and wheeled about. The man who followed him was shabby and bemired and unshaven, but Gervase knew him at last. “Jack!” he cried, “oh, Jack!” and, running back even faster than he had retreated, threw his arms about Jack Careless.

For a moment the two long-parted comrades clung close together. Gervase’s ribs fairly ached under Jack’s hug, but he scarcely heeded. He had found Jack again, Jack, whom he had thought far away in the Low Countries, and he was happy. For he attached no meaning to the words that Jack kept repeating, “No matter now, whatever comes! I’ve seen you again. I know all’s well with you.”

Then another voice, sharp and querulous, broke

in. "If a shred of prudence is left you, Captain, pray have the sanity to bring yourself and the brat under cover."

Gervase had never forgotten that voice. "'Tis that vile Paulet man!" he cried aloud. He tried to wriggle out of Jack's arms, but Jack, holding him as easily as if he were a puppy, carried him across the cellar.

At the western end of the cellar a flight of steps in the old days had led up into the house-yard. Now the steps had crumbled away, the outlet into the yard was choked with bushes, and the opening into the cellar was screened with weeds below and vines that drooped from above. In short, the old stairway made a tiny cave, and at the entrance of the cave sat Ferdinando Paulet. His beard was untrimmed and his hair unkempt. His clothes were stained and tumbled, and a bloody bandage was swathed above one of his knees. Altogether, for a tidy, fastidious little man, who hated dirt as a cat hates water, the Colonel was in a sorry state.

This sorry state had not improved Colonel Paulet's temper. He fairly glowered upon Jack and Gervase, as they settled themselves behind the weeds near the entrance to the stairway. "A very well-

considered move you have made, Captain," he sneered. "Our young friend here will run home and inform his good Puritan brother —"

"No, he won't," Jack answered indignantly, with his arm about Gervase. "You understand," he addressed the boy swiftly. "You mustn't breathe a word to any one about our being here. We came alive from the fight at Worcester. I laid hands on a horse — 'twas wounded and it died, but we got as far as here upon our journey. We're trying to reach the coast and escape into France. The Colonel knows the country hereabout, and 'tis lucky he does! For if these beggarly Roundheads take us — well, the Colonel has slipped into England too many times. If they could catch him, they'd hang him for a spy, and hang me too, no doubt, for company's sake."

Gervase heard him out, with his eyes big and his breath indrawn. His game of fugitives had turned in an instant to dreadful earnest. Hang Jack, *his* Jack! The horror of the thought moved his brain to swift action. "But — but you've done naught to be hanged," he stammered. "If 'tis along of the Paulet man they'll hang you — oh, Jack, why don't you leave him? Come home with me, and I'll hide you, Garford and I, we'll hide you

in the stable, and bring you food. We'll take care of you, only leave *him* — ”

Paulet gave a malicious little laugh. “ A fine lad that ! ” he said dryly.

Jack flushed. “ You shouldn't think of such a trick, Gervase,” he rebuked the boy. “ Colonel Paulet is wounded in the leg so he cannot fend for himself. I can't leave him.”

It was seldom that Jack scolded, and the rebuke hurt Gervase, the more so since Colonel Paulet, with his hateful smile, was listening. He hung his head and moved a little away from Jack.

Surely, enough had been said, but Paulet, wounded and uncomfortable, was unable to forego the pleasure of hurting Jack. “ The lad is a credit to your upbringing, Captain,” he pressed his advantage, in an ugly tone of banter. “ If that's his best idea of honorable conduct — ”

“ You're a pretty one to talk of honorable conduct, Colonel Paulet,” cried Gervase, goaded to defence, “ when 'twas you helped Mr. Darrell to get me, there at the Hague. You know you did ! ” His voice rose sharper. “ He thanked you that night, — I heard him, — and you said you had helped him. And you gave me up to him, and you laughed when I asked you to help me, you laughed

at me." The bitter memory of that night at the Hague when he was taken from Jack swept over Gervase. He caught Jack's arm and clung tight to it. "He did do it!" he repeated, almost in tears, and looked up into Jack's face.

Something Gervase saw there, the set of Jack's mouth, the look in his eyes that were bent upon Paulet, held him silent. He heard the insects chirruping in the sunny brown grass that fringed the edge of the cellar, heard the whir of grasshoppers among the weeds, and then he heard Paulet speak in a strained voice that tried to be indifferent. "Nonsense, Jack! The boy mistook what I said, I do assure you."

"I doubt if he mistook," Jack answered quietly. That very quietness in Jack, who was so ready to fly into a passion, was ominous. "I remember things now. You were mighty eager to have me come into Scotland." Of a sudden he started to his feet, with eyes afire, and stood over Paulet. "You pitiful little scoundrel!" he blazed. "You that would stoop to fight a child, that betrayed him to that knave of a Roundhead,—betrayed him, poor baby! and took him from me and near broke his heart. You — Name o' Heaven! if you had but two legs to stand on, I'd — Well, in any case,

I'm done with you, Ferdinando Paulet. I'm done with you."

For an instant the two men gazed at each other, and Paulet's face was white. Then Jack turned and strode clattering away across the cellar. Gervase realized that Paulet was forsaken and hopeless now, that at last he was being made to pay for that cruel piece of work at the Hague; but, spite of all, he did not exult, nor did he so much as stay to glance at Paulet. Beside the passion of the two men his own resentment seemed childish. Silent and half frightened, he scrambled after Jack.

He found Jack seated on a charred girder at the other side of the chimney, and he sat down beside him, resting his hand on the basket hilt of Jack's rapier, just as he used to do. In the cellar it was very quiet, save for the grasshoppers and crickets and the snap of the sun-dried weeds. Paulet did not once call after them, and Jack sat with his elbow on his knee and his chin in his fist, and scowled at the ground before him.

Once Gervase ventured to whisper, "You'll come home with me now, won't you, Jack?" but Jack made no answer, and then, after another long time, Gervase grew aware that he was hungry. Jack would be hungry too, no doubt. Gervase dragged

from his pocket the thick bread and butter, which was rather crumbly now about the edges. "Jack!" He plucked his comrade's sleeve. "Let's eat now. Here's some bread."

"Bread!" Jack turned quickly. "Bless you, lad! I've eat naught since yester-morning!" He took the bread, but then he paused. As Paulet had once sneered, Jack was a dull-witted fellow. It had seemed quite possible to him, a moment before, to go away and leave the false friend who had tricked him and deceived him, and robbed him of the child he loved; but now, with food actually in his hands, it was not possible for him to neglect that other hungry, helpless man. "Paulet's a useful fellow to the king's cause," he muttered, as if in apology to Gervase, and then he cried, "A plague on the king's cause! I can't leave a crippled man," and rose to his feet.

"You're going back to him?" Gervase cried in dismay. "Ah, leave him, Jack. Why do you need to care for him?"

Once more Jack Careless stated his ridiculous, magnificent creed. "Because I'm a gentleman," he said simply.

Side by side they went back to the stairway. Paulet sat there, with his white face as indifferent

as ever, but he had slouched down on his elbow since Jack left him. "Come back, have you?" he said, and the bravado in his voice could not cover a trace of anxiety.

"You're hurt, so I shall stay by you till you are in a place of safety," Jack said curtly. "But if we both come alive from this, Ferdinando Paulet, I'll call you to account for the vile trick you played me."

While Jack was speaking, he had divided the bread in two portions. Now he gave one half to Paulet, and, reseating himself among the weeds, drew Gervase down beside him. "You'll share with me, lad," he said.

Perhaps Ferdinando Paulet was as much ashamed as it was possible for a tidy piece of clockwork to be. "Come, come, Jack," he said, between wolfish bites of bread and butter. "You must believe that in all I did I honestly meant what was for the boy's best good. And you can't deny that the young rogue does not look ill treated."

Indeed, however grudgingly, Jack must admit the truth of that last saying. Gervase had shot up an inch since his illness. His face was fuller and his skin a healthier brown than in the days at the

Hague. In his rough gray clothes, with his short hair, he looked less of a baby and more of a boy. There was something of the little man, too, in the firm tone in which he refused a share of Jack's scant portion of the bread. Certainly, in the last six months, Gervase had changed, and changed for the better. Jack was glad for that, and at the same time was conscious of a tinge of sorrow that the boy had received benefits from that knave Henry Darrell.

"So that brother of yours treats you well?" he asked jealously.

Gervase nodded. The little troubles of his life at Southurst were too small to be mentioned in the face of Jack's danger. "Yes, he treats me well," he answered. "He does not send me to school, and he never whipped me but once, and that was a long time ago. And he gave me a dog. It's a true Talbot, Garford says. Ah, Jack, I wish you could see my dog! And I have a horse of my own —"

"Captain!" Paulet cried sharply, "here's our horse."

"Be quiet!" Jack answered, and clapped an arm round Gervase as if to keep him from actual hurt. "I tell you I won't hear to it, Paulet. I've fair prayed for another sight o' the lad before the end

came, and now, now when I have him, d'ye think I'll use him to save my skin?"

"If your prayers find such speedy answer," Paulet said bitterly, "best pray next for a horse, Jack. I can't walk, and you can't carry me. You know that unless Heaven sends a horse to help us to the coast, we're like to ride the gallows."

That last was not a pretty word, and Jack's brows drew together. Still he repeated, "I won't drag him into any trouble," and held tight to Gervase.

But Gervase, with understanding bright in his eyes, looked up into his face and drew closer to him. "Could I help you, Jack?" he whispered. "Could my horse help you?"

"No!" Jack answered shortly.

"Yes!" said Ferdinando Paulet.

CHAPTER XXII

"IN THE COLD AND HEAVY RAIN"

THE sun was near to setting when at last Gervase trudged back to Southurst. All the way he said over the instructions which Colonel Paulet, with endless patience, had repeated and re-repeated to him. Thus and so he was to do and say, and by such means he would give his dapple-gray Gallant into the hands of the fugitives, and so would save the Colonel and save Jack Careless. For in the end Jack, though unwilling, had consented to let Gervase aid him. After all, Jack loved life as well as any hearty young man of six and twenty.

The importance of the task that was laid upon Gervase made him very proud and gloomily silent all that evening. It was in vain that Bessie tried to cajole him with sweet cakes; he would not venture out into the kitchen lest somehow, by word or even look, he betray what was on his mind. Instead he went early to his chamber, but

though he lay down in his bed, it was long before he slept.

He had but just drowsed off, as he thought, though in reality it was close upon midnight, when a rushing sound roused him. At first he took it for the rustling of trees in the wind, but soon he realized that it was in truth the steady downpour of rain. He thought of the two hunted men, drenched in the open cellar pit, and his heart ached for Jack Careless. It seemed a treason that he should lie snug and warm in his bed while Jack was out in the cold. But next moment he pictured to himself the tidy Colonel Paulet, splattered with mud and plastered with rain, and at that picture he giggled nervously.

Still, it was no laughing matter. If that rain continued it would be well-nigh impossible for Gervase to carry out Paulet's careful plans. That alarming thought kept Gervase broad awake. Wide-eyed he lay staring into the dark, and harked to the slow plash of the rain, and hoped that it would cease. But the gray light of dawn came into the chamber, and still the rain drizzled down.

All that endless morning Gervase sat curled up on the broad window-seat of the hall, and watched

the sky and the long shafts of rain. The turf of the lawn was puddled and plashy, and the trees were a dripping, dark green. The great clock in the hall ticked slowly, with a sound like that of the dropping of water. The minutes were running out, and the day was passing,—the day that was to give Jack Careless safety.

So visibly worried and miserable was Gervase that any one might have guessed he bore a weighty secret, if there had been any one to heed him. But Henry Darrell was away with the army, and Dame Greenwood was sitting with Mistress Darrell, and the under-servants knew better than to talk to Gervase when he was in what Bessie called "the dumps." Undisturbed he spent his wretched morning on the window-seat, and choked down his dinner, under Bessie's sharp eye, and stole back again to his dreary watch.

It was past two of the clock when for the first time the rain showed signs of slackening. Only a gray drop fell here and there against the black of the broad-leaved chestnut trees or wrinkled the dark puddles on the terrace. Hot and cold with the hope that was on him, Gervase ran out through the wet grass, under the dripping trees, to the stable.

"Sander," he cried, "will you not put saddle to the horses? I wish to ride out."

Garford whistled and dropped the headstall that he was cleaning. "Are ye daft, master?" he questioned. "Or do ye shed water like a duck?"

"I wish to go," stammered Gervase. "We'll ride to the Widow Profit's farm. I—I—" he tried a little invention of his own,— "the brook will be full with this rain, and I would play in it. Prithee, Sander. I think long to go."

Garford knew well enough that he ought to refuse the boy's request, but—as Paulet had calculated when he laid the plan—he would not let slip an opportunity to speak with the Widow Profit. He grumbled a little, half hesitated, but in the end he saddled and bridled Gallant and a brown hackney.

While Garford made ready the hackney, Gervase stood by Gallant's head. The horse nuzzled the breast of Gervase's doublet, seeking for bread, and Gervase stroked his soft nose and his shiny gray neck. "Good Gallant!" he murmured. "Good boy! Thou likest thy master, dost thou not? Thou—" His voice trembled. For the first time the realization came to him that he was to lose Gallant. Assuredly Jack Careless,

fleeing for his life, could not stop to bring back the horse nor to send him. When Gallant went away he went forever.

"All's ready, master," said Garford, coming up to Gervase, and then, as he glanced at the boy, changed his tone. "Is aught amiss with ye, sir? Come, come, give over, and ye shall ride out to-morrow."

Gervase shook his head. "No, I'm going just the same," he said, in a low voice. "Pray you, hold my stirrup, Sander." But all along the wet road to the farm Gervase was very silent, and again and again he stroked Gallant's glossy neck.

The Widow Profit held up her hands in amazement when Gervase and Garford came splashing into the mire of her barnyard. "On such a day as this!" she cried. "Sander Garford, you're a stark fool to bring the child here in such weather."

Garford grinned. "'Twas he brought me," he said.

The widow did not stop to reply, but hurried Gervase into her snug kitchen. "He'll take his death if he stays out in the damp, the poor motherless bairn!" she said to Garford. She made Gervase sit down by the fire, and she gave him a Banbury cake, warm and spicy, which she had baked

for him. Meantime, Garford looked out of the window with a dissatisfied expression. He much preferred having the Widow Profit to himself.

Gervase, for his part, was quite as much troubled as Garford. This kindness of the widow was something for which Colonel Paulet had not allowed in his plan,—a natural oversight, since the Colonel was not given to crediting people with qualities that he did not himself possess. So at this moment Gervase found that his instructions failed him, and he scarcely knew what to do. In piteous uncertainty he nibbled at his cake for a moment, and then at last he had an idea. "Thank you very much," he faltered, "but I think I'll go down to the brook now."

"Indeed you won't, sir," the widow answered promptly. "And the mud up to your knees on the path!"

"Then I'll go out on the porch," muttered Gervase, with a beseeching look at Garford. If only Colonel Paulet had let him take Garford into the secret, as he had wished, it would all have been so easy! Gervase trusted Garford, — but Colonel Paulet, knowing himself so well, trusted no man.

Yet it was Garford who came to Gervase's rescue now. "Let the lad alone, widow," he counselled.

"At Southurst he runs in and out as it likes him. Only—" Garford added, trying to steer his course between Gervase and the widow—"perhaps ye'd best not go to the brook to-day, master. We can come hither again to-morrow." He said this with a glance at the widow, who laughed and turned away to the fire.

It was only a half consent, but it gave Gervase what he sought—a chance to get out from under Garford's eye. Not daring to stay lest the permission be withdrawn, he ran out upon the porch. Only an instant did he hesitate there,—barely time enough to make sure that neither of the widow's men was in sight, and that the corner of the stable where the horses had been tied was out of range of the kitchen windows,—and then he drew a long breath, and dashed toward the horses. He ran a-tiptoe, for all that he knew those in the kitchen could not possibly hear him, and he did not draw a second breath till he had rounded the corner of the stable.

Gervase was safe now, unless Garford had seen him run across the yard, and, guessing everything in a flash, should follow. That possibility made him work with feverish haste. He unhasped the great gate of the barnyard, and painfully swung it

open, and then, with shaking fingers, he untied Gallant. Garford had hitched the horse with a stiff knot in the bridle-rein that cost Gervase a minute of desperate labor, but at last he had the horse free. He scrambled up the gate, and, mounting from the topmost bar, set off at a gallop.

From the widow's barnyard there was a bad pitch to descend, but Gervase went down it recklessly. Luckily Gallant was sure-footed, for Gervase himself was too frightened to do more than hold to the reins and the pommel of the saddle. The mud flew high as his head, and the wet hawthorns along the lane splattered him. His hat was struck off, but that did not matter. Nothing mattered, so long as he did not hear Sander Garford galloping at his heels.

At a breakneck pace Gervase swung into the highway and headed for Southurst. The road was heavy with mud. The horse beneath him slipped and scrambled, but it was a good beast and it carried little weight. The highway rolled out swiftly behind Gervase. Drowned fields, black wayside bushes, the slate-gray sky,—all slid by him. The little bridge that spanned Black Brook was before him. He heard Gallant's feet thud upon the plank-ing, and then he found himself in the black shadow



“ And next moment Gallant stood panting, with Jack
Careless gripping to the bridle.”

of the trees that straggled from the wood about Broughton. He knew this for the spot of which Paulet had spoken, and, bracing himself in the stirrups, he tugged with all his might at the bridle, but Gallant had the bit in his teeth, and his head was pointed homeward.

For one despairing moment Gervase thought that all was lost. Tug as he would, with his arms straining from their sockets, he could not check the horse's speed. "Jack! oh, Jack!" he called hopelessly.

Jack heard him. As Gallant came abreast of the last of the trees, Gervase saw a tall figure spring out into the roadway, and the next moment Gallant stood quivering, with Jack Careless gripping to the bridle.

Gervase reeled in his saddle with the suddenness of the halt, and then, clutching at Jack's shoulder, slid to the ground. "Be quick! Oh, be quick!" he cried.

Already Jack had turned the horse toward the roadside, but with his free hand he caught Gervase by the shoulder. "Well done, boy!" he said, in a rasping voice. For a night in the rain had not bettered Jack Careless; most unheroic of heroes, he had caught a tremendous cold.

But Paulet had come through unharmed. Alert and tense as Gervase had never seen him, he stepped out from behind one of the dripping tree-trunks. "Briskly, Jack!" he said, in the curt voice of a commander. "The bridle here! Let us get the horse under shelter. They must think the brat was thrown. He should be muddled. Thrust him down into the mire."

"I won't!" wheezed Jack. He caught up a handful of the roadside mud and plastered it down the left side of Gervase's doublet and breeches. "God bless you, honey!" he said as he did so, and hugged Gervase to him an instant, then plunged away after Paulet and Gallant into the wet woods.

Shaken and breathless, Gervase found voice only for one outcry. "Oh, Jack, don't let the Paulet man hurt my horse. Be good to my Gallant."

In answer he heard only the crash of wet boughs thrust aside, and then the wood before him was silent and lifeless, save that here and there a branch, still swaying, scattered the water drops. Jack and Paulet and Gallant had vanished. The work was done, and Jack was saved, and Gallant was gone forever.

One moment Gervase stood there in the mud,

with his troubled eyes upon the spot where Jack had disappeared among the trees, but the next moment the fag end of Paulet's instructions, which were for Jack's help, came back to him. He turned and ran up the road toward the Widow Profit's farm. It had begun to storm again. The rain beat coldly on his face, and the mud clogged his shoes. He stumbled and panted, but still he ran on. At first he had hoped not to meet Garford till he had put a long space between him and the scene of the encounter with Jack, but as the rain buffeted him and the mud squilched under his feet, he began to pray that he meet Garford soon. Yet when he heard round the curve before him the splash of horse hoofs, he stopped, fairly rigid with terror. The full realization of what he had just done came over him. Garford would guess the secret, every one would know, and they would doubtless kill him for helping Cavaliers to get away. He would have plunged in among the wet bushes, anywhere to escape the sight of Garford, but the strength to move was not in him.

Garford came headlong round the curve. His face was white, and he looked as frightened even as Gervase himself. Scarce pausing to rein in

his horse, he leaped from the saddle and caught the boy's arm. "What's happened, master?" he panted. "You're not hurt? Good faith! your brother'd nigh kill me! What's happened?"

"I—I—" For an instant Gervase could only gasp, too frightened to recall his lesson. "I fell—Gallant threw me," he got out the words at last. "He ran away. I wished to ride by myself. But he threw me."

"You're not hurt?" pleaded Garford.

"No, no!" Gervase shook his head.

The man felt him over hastily, and his face lightened with relief as he found that no bones were broken. He lifted Gervase to his own saddle, and vaulted up behind him. "Well, well, it might 'a' been worse, sir," he said, with something of his old cheerfulness. "The mud will brush off ye, and for the little rogue of a horse, we'll follow his tracks and run him down in a trice."

Gervase trembled under Garford's hold. "Please!" he said, almost inaudibly. "I don't care about the horse. I don't care if I never see him again. Oh, Sander, don't stop to look for him. Take me home! Oh, take me home!"

CHAPTER XXIII

A TRAITOR TO THE PARLIAMENT

No, he wanted no supper, Gervase answered Bessie's well-meant urgings, and so crept away to his chamber. No one would come to seek him there, he reasoned, and it was the sight of a doubting face, the sound of a questioning voice, that he most dreaded. Though it was no more than twilight, he lay down in his bed, but he could not sleep. Once and even twice a drowsiness stole over him, but each time he gave a sudden nervous start that threw him broad awake. He lay open-eyed in the dusk, and harked to the boards that snapped in the floor and to the rain that pelted against the window.

The clock in the hall tolled eight. Gervase counted the strokes and wondered that they stopped so soon. He had thought it must be midnight. He seemed to have lain there for hours. Then outside, in the dark and the rain, he caught the sound of horses' hoofs, and presently he heard

below the muffled slam of doors and the scurry of feet. He had a presentiment of the alarming truth: Henry Darrell himself had come home.

Gervase was not long in suspense. He had had barely a moment in which to repeat to himself that he knew not what to do, if Henry had really come, when he heard in the corridor without a step that he remembered well. He saw a first ray of candle-light slip through the half-open door of his chamber and glimmer along the dark wainscot. Then he saw nothing more, for he snuggled down into the bed and closed his eyes fast. But he heard Henry's step leisurely crossing the chamber, and he felt Henry's hand laid upon his shoulder.

"Come, come, Gervase," spoke Henry's voice. "I've no thought to chide you. Cease your feigning and open your eyes."

How did Henry know that he was awake, Gervase wondered? Why, he had shut his eyes so tight that the effort fairly wrinkled his nose! But there was no deceiving the big brother. Submissively Gervase opened his eyes.

"They tell me you had a sharp fall to-day," Henry went on. "You were not hurt?"

Gervase shook his head, abashed and cowering under the gaze that searched him.

"How did you strike the ground? Your shoulder? Your back? How was it?"

"I—I struck here," faltered Gervase, and, at a venture, pressed his hand to his right side.

"Hm!" muttered Henry. He set his candle on the table and passed his hand firmly along the boy's ribs. "Do you feel aught?"

"A—a little—sore," gulped Gervase.

Henry put by the little fellow's shirt and examined him more thoroughly. The child's smooth flesh showed no sign of bruise or even of discoloration. "You've made a happy escape, Gervase, for which you should thank Heaven," Henry said at last. "You're not so much as scratched, and whatever soreness you feel will wear away by morning."

He turned to take up his candle, but there he paused, with his eyes on the little heap of Gervase's clothes, which lay just as the boy had stepped out of them. "You should form more orderly habits and hang up your garments," Henry said painstakingly. He picked up Gervase's muddy doublet and was about to throw it across a chair when he seemed to see something. He carried the doublet to the table and looked it over sharply, then picked up the breeches and examined them too. "Ger-

vase," he said quietly, "how does it happen that you struck upon your right side when you fell, and yet it is the left side of your clothes that is mud-died?"

Gervase wrung the end of the sheet between his hands. "I — I don't know, sir," he stammered.

"And the mud is fair plastered up and down the clothes," pursued the methodical Henry. "It does not look as if you fell. It looks more as if one had put mud upon your clothes with his hand."

"But I *did* fall — oh, I did!" Gervase repeated, and began to swallow hard in his throat.

Henry tossed by the clothes and came and set himself on the side of the bed. "No one means to blame you, Gervase," he said, with unusual gentleness. "I only wish you to tell me all about this fall, exactly how it happened. Did Gallant start or shy?"

"I — I don't know. I fell," Gervase whimpered. "Indeed I fell."

"Where did it happen?"

"At this side of the bridge over Black Brook — Oh, no!" he choked, as he bethought himself of Paulet's instructions. "'Twas but a half-mile this side o' the lane —"

"Which was it, now?" Henry questioned more

sternly. "Gervase, are you trying to conceal something?"

"No, no!" Gervase hid his face between his arms. "Don't ask me. Please don't, Mr. Darrell. Oh, I'm telling you everything I can tell you. But I promised. I— Oh, prithee don't ask me, Brother Henry, don't!" He was crying now as he had not cried for months, with agonized, strangling sobs that shook his slender body.

Henry was almost equally distressed. The part of a bully, which Gervase always assigned to him, was very little to his liking. He gave up all thought of further questions, — indeed, to question Gervase at that moment would have been sheer brutality, — and instead turned all his efforts to soothing the child. It was quite in vain. His kindness had much the same effect on Gervase as another man's ill usage would have had. In the end Henry went sadly from the chamber and left Gervase with face still hidden in the pillow.

Gervase lay thus the night through, now dozing a few minutes, now waking with a start of terror to realize all the trouble that was on him. It was not till daylight that he had an hour of real sleep, and then he dreamed that Henry, with the steady eyes that looked through him, wrung his secret from him

and took him into a court-room which was just like Henry's closet, and the judge, who had the face of the Paulet man, said that a boy who helped a malignant fugitive must be hanged, and must be whipped before he was hanged.

Gervase went to breakfast that morning with a white face and heavy eyes that filled whenever he was spoken to. Henry wisely said nothing about the horse, but, when he had got from Gervase an assurance that he felt "quite well," set him to do his task at the parlor table, just as usual. Gervase was very quiet, and bent his eyes diligently on his Latin grammar, but at the end of an hour he could not repeat a word that he had learned.

"Well, well, 'tis no great matter," said Henry, with unusual kindness. "Run out of doors and play. You may go to the stable, if you wish," he added.

It was a permission that a week before Gervase would have hailed with delight, but now he shook his head. "No, sir, I do not care to," he murmured.

Indeed, at that moment Gervase would far rather have gone down into the lower cellar where the rats were than to have spent the morning in the stable. For Garford was there, and surely Garford, who had been with him almost at the moment when

the deed was done, must suspect the truth of what had happened by the Black Brook. So strong was his fear of Garford that when the stableman came that afternoon into the hall, to take some orders from Henry, Gervase ran away and hid.

The only thing that made Gervase able to endure the worry and the terror of those hours was the thought of Jack. He had lost his beloved Gallant, and he had committed a dreadful crime against the Roundhead powers, and he would no doubt be terribly punished for it, but — he had saved Jack. With Gallant at their service Jack and the wounded Colonel would reach the mouth of the Severn by the second morning, so Jack had assured Gervase, and from there they would get shipping into France. Gervase counted the hours anxiously till that second morning came, and then, in the thought that Jack was safe, he grew a little less woebegone.

But still he was a very wretched little boy. The consciousness of his secret and the expectation of dire punishment weighed upon him every moment. He hung his head whenever his brother looked at him, — and Henry looked at him often in those days, — and he would not so much as step out of doors or even into the kitchen, but moped about the hall or sat listless in his chamber.

Thus Henry found him, on the third morning, curled up in a disconsolate heap on the southern window-seat. At the sight of him, so piteously small and harassed-looking, the older brother forgot the promise he had made to himself. "Gervase," he said, almost pleadingly, "will you not tell me what happened on the day that Gallant threw you?"

Gervase's eyes grew big with distress, and he began to tremble. "I fell," he repeated. "I c-can't tell you."

"There! No matter," Henry said. But when he had set Gervase his morning task, he sent for Roge the stableboy, and despatched him with a written message to Worcester town.

Never dreaming of what was in store, Gervase did his tasks and ate his dinner, not over hungrily. It was a fine, bright afternoon, but instead of running out, he called Merriman, and sat down with him in the broad western window of the hall. Out of doors the trees were touched with autumn. The elms and the oaks at the front of Southurst were still richly green with full leafage, but the horse-chestnuts and the lime trees were turning yellow, and the young beeches of the plantation were russet. Near the plantation stood a walnut tree, and Gervase, remembering it at that moment, won-

dered listlessly if the nuts were ripe for gathering. Perhaps sometime, in the dim future, when all this trouble was ended, if it ever ended, he would go to the tree and look for nuts. Then his eyes strayed to the bit of the white highway to Wardington village, which showed between the trees at the edge of the lawn. What an afternoon it was for a gallop! And what gallops he had had on his dapple-gray Gallant, and now he would never see Gallant again!

The bit of white roadway grew streaked before Gervase's eyes, and then, of a sudden, it grew clear, every detail of tree and road, horribly clear, and he leaned against the window ledge, tense and rigid, and stared upon it. A white puff of dust rose on the roadway, and he knew what was coming, even before the dust blew aside and showed behind it the bright breastplates and steel caps of a squad of horse troopers. He knew, too, whither they were headed, even before they turned in under the avenue of trees that led to Southurst, and he knew for whom they were coming.

Fairly dizzied with fright, he turned and stumbled across the empty hall to the staircase. Merri-man leaped against him. "Hush! Hush!" panted Gervase. "They'll hear us! They'll hear us!"

That danger gave him strength. Swiftly but without noise he ran up the stairs to his chamber. He was not heroic, he knew, for all that he was a Cavalier and a gentleman, but the Roundhead army was very large, and he was very small to array himself against it. He shut the door of his chamber and, as there was no bolt, he stood the chair against the door, and then he crawled under the bed and dragged Merriman after him.

For long minutes he lay there, till the sunlight that had rested on the floor crept up the farther wall, and died out on the ceiling. Merriman whimpered a little and struggled, but Gervase held him fast with both arms about his neck. In the end, the dog licked his hands and lay quiet, and Gervase lay quiet too, with his cheek against Merriman's satiny coat. Down below he heard, once and again, muffled footsteps, and at the sound he shrank farther into the dark beneath the bed. He was hot in that narrow space and half stifled, but he dared not venture forth. Only once did he creep to the edge of the bed and lift the valance for a breath of cooler air, but instantly he thought to hear some one coming up the stairs. He scrambled back into the farthest corner and held his breath in terror.

But no one came, in spite of all Gervase's starts and quakings. The slow afternoon dragged out, and it was twilight in the chamber, and thick darkness beneath the bed, before he heard the latch of his door rattle. He sat quiet and pressed Merri-man's head against the breast of his doublet.

Again the latch rattled. "Open the door, if it please you," came a woman's shrill voice.

The door must have been pushed open, for Gervase heard a great clatter and then a crash, as if some one had stumbled into the chair. "Drat the boy!" spoke the unmistakable voice of Bessie.

Gervase heard her make a few steps into the middle of the chamber, and then he heard her speak again. "Master Gervase! Are you here, sir? Pray you, come out. Your brother bade me find you. He feared you'd run away again. Come, sir!"

Plainly, by the sound, she was searching the room while she talked, and now she bent and lifted the valance. Gervase blinked as the gray light came in upon him, and Merriman gave a little snapping bark. It was no use hiding, Gervase reflected, and before Bessie could cry, "Are ye there?" he crept out into the chamber.

He was red and dusty and trembling, but he

owed it to his manhood to explain. "I—I was seeking my peg-top, Bessie," he quavered, as he rose to his feet, and then he braced himself for what he knew was coming. "Do—do the soldiers—am I to go with them—now?" he whispered.

"The soldiers? You?" cried Bessie. "Why, thou poor lamb, did that fright thee? No, indeed, they're not seeking babes like thou, but they're seeking some one here has been in mischief, as I always said he'd be, some one that's found no better work than to be selling Master Henry's horses to these runaway malignant soldiers."

Gervase cowered at this frank naming of his crime. "Helping fugitives?" he repeated. "Bessie, I—who—"

"Who?" cried Bessie. "Why, if it like you, who but that rogue Sander Garford?"

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CREED OF CAPTAIN CARELESS

HENRY DARRELL had acted, to his own thinking, on the most conclusive evidence. At the very outset he had had a grave suspicion, from Gervase's confusion and his contradictory stories, that the tale of the fall from the horse was an elaborate falsehood. Clearly, something had happened, something that Gervase "could not tell about," something the mere mention of which reduced him to such a state of hysteria that Henry had not dared to question him. But Henry had continued to use his eyes and ears. He noticed that Gervase was afraid of Garford, and he thought it significant that the most diligent search failed to discover the slightest trace of the missing horse. He knew also that the countryside was swarming with Cavalier fugitives, and Garford had been a Cavalier soldier. Henry privately questioned Garford as to why he had let Gervase ride out on so stormy a day, and why he had suffered the boy to go out

of his sight. Garford, conscious that he would be sharply rebuked for the hours he had idled at the Widow Profit's farm, shuffled and lied — the worst thing he could possibly do. The case was perfectly clear then to Henry: Garford had disposed of Gervase's horse to some fugitive for love or for hire, and he had frightened Gervase into concealing the truth.

Henry's anger blazed at this discovery. He might have forgiven Garford for aiding a fugitive, — Henry, though a Parliamentary, was a moderate one, — but he had trusted Gervase to Garford, and Garford had broken his trust and abused the child. Henry could not forgive that. He despatched Roge with a message to Worcester, and Roge returned with a file of dragoons.

Of all these reasons for Henry's action Gervase, listening wide-eyed to Bessie's news, guessed nothing. He knew only that by some freak of chance Garford had been arrested in his stead, and probably Garford would be hanged. Colonel Paulet's well-grounded expectation of such a fate, added to Gervase's long-established fear of the Roundheads, led the boy to the conclusion that all prisoners who fell into the hands of the Parliamentarians were thus mercilessly dealt with. He

longed to ask Bessie when Garford was to suffer, but he did not. Not only did he feel that she, being a woman, would know little to the point, but also he dared say nothing lest she suspect at once that he was the real culprit.

But without the least suspicion Bessie babbled on. "Ay, they've arrested him, and serve him right! but 'tis a pretty time o' day for us, wi' a dozen great hulking horse troopers lounging in our kitchen! They're to bide here the night. Trust Isaac Dunch to worry Master Henry all he can."

Gervase sat down limply on the nearest stool. "Dunch?" he questioned, in a dry little distant voice. "Is—is he here?"

"Ay, they sent him to look into the matter," grumbled Bessie. "A pretty fellow to set in the saddle here with his troopers, and he no friend to Master Henry, as every one knows. He's naught but a militia major, in any case, and his knaves had better be at the ploughtail than playing at soldiers. Exactly fit they are to be hunting down men that Master Henry and the Ironsides ha' beaten already."

It was too dusky in the chamber for the girl to see the expression of Gervase's face, but some-

thing in the droop of his little figure must have warned her of his terror, for she changed her tone. "To be sure, master, you've no love to the Major, poor little heart! after the way that he frightened you that time, the ugly beast that he is! 'Twas for that, I'm sure, that Master Henry said you need not come to supper. I'll fetch it to you here, sir."

"I'm not a-hungred, Bessie," faltered Gervase, but the girl had bustled out of the room.

She was back in a trice, with a candle in a shiny pewter candlestick, and a tray that held bread and honey—a generous spoonful—and a little warden pie. "There, Master Gervase," she said beamingly. "Here's everything as you like it."

That was true enough, but Gervase had no appetite even for sweets that night. The honey was like gall upon his tongue, and the pie choked him. After the first few mouthfuls he pushed by his trencher.

"Why, what's amiss with you?" cried Bessie.

At that Gervase hid his head between his arms. "Oh, I'm sorry for Sander Garford," he moaned. "I'm right sorry."

"Well, you don't need to be," snapped Bessie.

"He's a stubborn rogue and like to get his deservings." Then she leaned over the boy and spoke in a coaxing whisper. "Master Gervase, honey, what was it that he did to you? Won't you tell it all to Bessie?"

Gervase made nothing out of this. "Prithee, don't vex," he said fretfully, without lifting his head. "Go away, Bessie."

Bessie went, at that broad hint,—went grumbling, and even took with her the candle. But Gervase cared nothing now for so slight a matter as being left alone in the dark. He was alone, that was the main thing. He got down from his stool, and went and set himself on the window-seat with Merriman beside him. He found comfort in keeping his arms about the dog's neck and comfort in the touch of the dog's moist tongue. Out of doors, as he saw when he looked forth, it was now almost dark. The poplars that bounded his vision rose in slender black sheaves against the purple sky, and the first stars were out. The insects creaked in the garden below, and the scent of the musk roses came faintly through the open window. It was a sweet, restful evening, but there was no rest for Gervase.

Over and over again his thoughts went the

same dreary round. Major Dunch hated Garford. With a thrill of horror Gervase remembered the day at the smithy when Dunch had threatened Garford with hanging. Now Dunch held Garford a prisoner, and no doubt he would carry out his threat. And Garford had done nothing—nothing. It was all Gervase's fault. Then, of course, Gervase must save Garford.

That was clear enough, but how was Gervase to do so? In most of the tales that he had heard the captives were rescued by means of coils of rope and of weapons smuggled in to them by their friends; but Gervase had neither rope nor weapons for Garford, nor could he get them without rousing suspicion. Still, he felt better at the mere prospect of doing something, and he encouraged himself with the thought that already he had saved Jack Careless from his enemies. At least, he would go below stairs, down into the kitchen where the serving-folk would be sitting, and from them he would find out where Garford was imprisoned. That would be a beginning, and then perhaps he would know what to do next.

Quite confidently, he went to his door, but just then he heard heavy steps on the stairs. Two

men, by the sound, were coming up from the hall, and one was snarling and scolding at the other for a clumsy fool. That was Major Dunch's voice. Gervase remembered it well, and he shrank back, half minded to scramble under the bed again. But the heavy steps turned aside before they reached his room. The door of the chamber across the corridor slammed, and then all was quiet.

Gervase stood with heart fluttering. After all, he guessed that Jack and the Paulet man had played a larger part in their own rescue than he had played. The sense of his own helplessness against the iron power typified by the bull-necked Major came crushingly upon him. Still, there was always Garford, and there was none but Gervase to aid him. "Because I'm a gentleman, because I'm a gentleman," Gervase found himself repeating Jack's creed, over and over again.

He went softly out of his chamber and closed the door on the eager dog who would have followed. The corridor was dusky, but the faint light that stole up from the hall below made it brighter than the dark chamber which Gervase had just quitted. He went forward securely, but very slowly. Twice he stood a time and listened for some sound of

danger from Major Dunch's room, and once he retreated a few paces. When he reached the head of the stairs he sat down for a moment. He was frightened by the quick pounding of his heart. He must master that and bite down all his fear before he ventured to show himself below. He leaned his head against the balustrade, with his eyes shut and his hands clenched, and waited, but he seemed to hear his heart-beats louder each minute.

The great clock in the hall struck slowly. Eight—nine—ten! Gervase counted the strokes with dismay. Why, all the household would be in bed at this hour! He would find no one in the kitchen to tell him what he sought to know. It was too late for him to help Garford. The night would pass, and the morning—he knew not what the morning would bring.

Gervase opened his eyes and sat blinking dully before him. At the foot of the stairs he saw a rectangle of brighter light lying upon the dim floor of the hall. He had been too full of his own schemes to take note of it before, but now he told himself that it came from the south parlor, and it meant that Henry was reading there. He remembered how, once before, that light had drawn him down the stairs to his brother. He

remembered all the time of his sickness, and a hundred little matter-of-fact kindnesses that his brother had done him.

Gervase rose to his feet, and, leaning hard upon the balustrade, stole down the stairs toward the patch of light. A board creaked under his foot. He heard the short, protesting bark of the hound Echo, and then he heard Henry's even voice: "Quiet, lass! Quiet!"

Gervase leaned against the newel post. He was fairly shivering, and he could hear his teeth knock together. "I can't! Oh, I can't!" he whispered. He heard a log yonder in the great fireplace break, and he saw it fall apart with a red glow of coals. The hall was very still again. He heard the tick of the great clock and the sharp rustle with which Henry, in the south parlor, turned a leaf of his book.

"Because I'm a gentleman," breathed Gervase, through teeth that now were fast set. He threw back his head and stepped into the open doorway where the light shone.

CHAPTER XXV

THE BROTHERS

ON the big table in the parlor a tall candle was burning, and at the end of the table where the light fell brightest Henry Darrell sat in his wooden elbow-chair. His face was grave and quiet, and his eyes were bent upon the book that was propped against his knee. The book was Alexander Read's *Treatise on Chirurgery*, and, had Gervase but known it, Henry seldom read that book unless he was troubled in spirit and wanted to be soothed. He was troubled now, for he did not find it a pleasant duty to hand Sander Garford over to Major Dunch, of all men, for correction. So Henry read the *Treatise on Chirurgery*, but, spite of his trouble, he stroked Echo's head gently with the hand that hung down at his side.

From the doorway Gervase watched Henry anxiously. He did not realize that he had stepped so lightly that Henry had not heard him. He thought that Henry was ignoring him on purpose, and that

alarmed him. He tried to speak, to draw Henry's attention, but he could not muster the courage. Dumb and frightened, he stood clutching at the door-jamb.

It seemed to Gervase that long minutes had passed, but in reality no more than thirty seconds had run out before the sense that some one was present made Henry Darrell raise his eyes. "You here, Gervase?" he said, after the first blank moment. "What's gone amiss? Why are you not in bed?"

Gervase crept into the room and, catching at the edge of the table, held himself erect. "Brother Henry," he began, and stopped, choked by the dryness in his throat. Through the twinkling candlelight, he saw Henry's face, quiet and intent. He swallowed hard. "It wasn't Garford," he blurted out. "Don't let them hurt him. He did naught. I gave them my horse. 'Twas Jack and Colonel Paulet — 'Twas to help Jack — "

Gervase heard the clatter of a book let fall, the crash of a man's starting to his feet. "John Careless?" cried Henry, in a vibrant, angry voice, such as Gervase had never heard, and made a step toward the door, toward Gervase.

One instant the boy flinched, but next instant

he sprang forward blindly and flung his arms about his brother. "Don't! Don't!" he almost screamed. "I say you must not! Garford — they must not hang him! 'Twas I — I — to help Jack! Garford did naught. Don't hang him; don't, don't!" The scream changed to harsh sobbing. Gervase sank his head and shoulders as if under a blow, but still he clutched his brother with his small arms rigid as bars of iron.

The hound Echo gave a worried growl, and Gervase choked in his sobbing, and for a long moment there was no other sound in the room. Henry stood speechless and motionless, with one hand clenched upon the table and the other on Gervase's shoulder. Half unseeingly he looked down at the boy's dark head, while he repeated to himself that in spite of the months that had passed they stood to each other just as they had stood in the cold fourth-story chamber at the Hague. Jack Careless's grip was still upon the lad, however close Henry might hold him.

The old jealousy leaped up and caught at Henry's throat. Jack Careless, who had turned his father against him in his latter years, when at last Henry might have won the affection that all his life he had coveted, who had trained up

the child, the last of Henry's family, who might have been Henry's comfort, to hate and fear his elder brother and hold always to his lawless, out-cast guardian — Ah, if he could lay his hands on Jack Careless, he would like well to make him suffer once as Careless had made him suffer through the child, to —

Then in the midst of this, its wildest paroxysm, the jealousy died in Henry. With the practical habit of a lifetime, he faced the actual needs of the situation. Careless, the worthless mischief-maker, against whom he was breathing empty threats, was gone, safe out of his reach, but here at hand was his miserable little victim, the cowering, frightened child. A great pity for Gervase, so little and so terrified, came over Henry. His hand unclenched and his set face relaxed.

"Don't cry," he said gently. "Come, come, 'tis not so bad as that."

He unloosed Gervase's hands that clutched at his doublet, and, lifting him in his arms, sat down again in the elbow-chair. "No one is to be hanged," he repeated. "Assuredly not. There's no need — Well, well, have your cry out, lad."

That was what Gervase did. The reaction from the strain of the last days had come upon

him, and for long minutes he sobbed and shuddered uncontrollably. "Garford — you'll not hang him?" he choked at intervals, and each time Henry repeated his assurance, "No one is to be hurt, I promise you."

Little by little Henry felt the boy's body, tense as steel wire at the first, relax wearily in his arms. He saw the dark head sink lower against his shoulder, and he heard the sobs less frequently. But for some time longer he sat silent. Once he raised Gervase a little in his arms, that his head might rest more comfortably, and Gervase suffered him without protest. The candle burned dimly on the table, and Henry put out his arm and snuffed it, and the hound Echo drew a long breath, and laid herself down again by her master's chair.

"Are you asleep, Gervase?" Henry ventured at last, in a studiedly gentle voice.

"N — no, sir."

"Come, sit up — that's a good boy. You haven't told me about it yet. I wish to hear everything — everything, so that I may help you. You believe that I wish to help you?"

Gervase nodded, with his face still hidden, and then he lifted his head slowly and rubbed his

sleeve across his eyes. "You — you won't — scold at me — please?" he faltered.

"I'll not scold at you. Now tell me everything about — about Jack Careless."

Gervase hung down his head and for a moment twisted at one of the bone buttons on the front of Henry's doublet, but presently he began to speak, in a low voice, and with catchings of the breath. He told the whole story of Jack and the Paulet man honestly, though he dared not look Henry in the eyes while he told it. This time Henry believed him, every word. Indeed, the story carried conviction. Part fitted part with the perfection of truth.

For a moment after Gervase's timid voice had died away the room was silent. Henry sat with eyes on the flickering candle, while he pondered on the situation as it shaped itself before him. Captain Careless, always a breeder of trouble, had coaxed Gervase into giving him his horse, and now was safe on the water. Meantime Sander Garford was under arrest, and Isaac Dunch, called in by Henry himself, had come to look into the whole affair. Henry frowned involuntarily. What a scene he would have with Dunch when he went to explain matters — and he must explain them,

for Garford's sake. And would the affair end with that stormy interview? He looked anxiously ahead. As Gervase's guardian, he was responsible for the boy's misconduct. The guilt of aiding the malignant fugitives would doubtless be laid at his own door; and Dunch, who for the moment was in authority, was his personal enemy.

"Gervase," Henry broke out, "I wish to Heaven you had told me all this three nights ago."

Gervase bent his head still lower over the bone button. "Jack said I mustn't tell," he whispered.

Always Jack Careless! but Henry caught a ray of comfort in the phrasing that Gervase had used. "Then you yourself, you wished to tell me?" he questioned eagerly.

Gervase shook his head. "I—I thought you would scold at me," he said in a low voice. "I durst not tell you." He looked up as he spoke, and met Henry's eyes. Something that he saw in their depths thrilled the child. On the impulse he put his arms about his brother's neck. "I—I did not think—you would be good to me," he whispered. "Oh, Henry, I'm sorry now that I did not tell."

It was but a crumb beside the feast that Jack Careless could have at will, but Henry did not

think of Careless. At last, after weeks of waiting, he had won from Gervase a sign of affection. He drew the child closer. "You'll tell me next time, eh?" he said.

Gervase sat up, with one arm about Henry's shoulder. His eyes were still wet, but he smiled at his brother adorably. "Yes, I'll tell you," he murmured. "And—and Garford won't be hanged?"

"No."

"And you won't let Major Dunch punish me?"

"Assuredly, no." Henry spoke sharply, but next moment he smiled in a rather sorry fashion. "Dunch will not worry you. He will get satisfaction enough from me."

Gervase did not follow Henry in his uncomfortable forebodings. "You are right kind," he said, bubbling over now with happiness and relief. "Do you know, Brother Henry,"—he slipped down to the floor and stood between Henry's knees, looking up into his face,— "after this I'll study just twice as much for you every day. That is," he added, "every day when 'tis stormy."

"That's a good boy," Henry said again, with admirable gravity.

Spite of the lateness of the hour, he would have

been content to sit studying Gervase in the new, friendly mood that was on the child. But Gervase had got what he came downstairs to get, and with perfect frankness he showed it by walking away to the door. "Good night, Brother Henry," he said, with one of the pretty bows that he had learned on the other side of the water. "And I thank you a deal, sir."

Henry sat and listened to the boy's quick footsteps till they died away on the staircase. Gervase was fairly running to his chamber. His troubles were over, and he would go to bed with a light heart. "Thank Heaven for that!" muttered Henry. He leaned his elbow on the table, and, shading his eyes with his hand, sat wondering just what he should say in explanation to Major Dunch.

CHAPTER XXVI

ON TRIAL

It was midnight before Gervase lay down in his bed, and naturally he slept till late the next morning. When he awoke at last he found that the sunshine had flooded over the window ledge and spread in a great yellow pool upon the floor. For a time he was content to lie watching the motes that swam in the strong light. It was a good world, he reflected, and he was glad to be alive. He would go and look for walnuts that very day, and perhaps he would go to the stable again. Sander Garford would be there, just as of old, for Henry had promised to release him. Henry would make everything right, and Gervase need worry himself no further. He drew a long breath of relief and, with eyes half shut, stretched himself lazily.

He still lay blinking, with his arms above his head, when he heard a step right at his door and the click of the latch. Some one was coming to

call him. He sat up with a great appearance of being wide awake, just as Praisever Simkin entered the chamber.

The old servingman's face was grave, yet he seemed to take a melancholy pride in the importance of his office. "Master Gervase," he said solemnly, "you are to have no fear, Master Henry says. It will be but for a few minutes, and no harm shall be done you."

Gervase had an agonized remembrance of how Jack Careless, with similar speeches, had persuaded him to have a tooth pulled, and, in spite of Jack's assurances, it *had* hurt. "Wh-what's to happen?" he asked anxiously.

"You are to rise and dress at once, sir," bade Simkin. "The master is below, and Major Dunch, and they wish to question you."

"Oh!" said Gervase, between vexation and relief. He had thought that he and his brother had arranged all that business the night before, and he had very little desire to see Major Dunch, but still it might be worse. He rose and dressed hastily, as Simkin bade.

"If you be in such a hurry, Simkin," he said, spying a ray of comfort in the situation, "no doubt I'd best not stay to brush my hair this morning."

But as Simkin thought otherwise, Gervase had to make a careful toilet, and under that affliction his high spirits began to sink. By the time that he left the chamber, he felt a real aversion to the interview with the Major. At a lagging pace he went down the corridor, and at a lagging pace, step by step, started down the stairs. From the hall below there came to him an occasional grumble of voices or scuffle of feet. He peeped over the balustrade, and what he saw held him motionless.

The great hall seemed full of men. Black coats, gleaming breastplates, white faces,—all dazzled at first before Gervase's eyes. Then, in an instant, he saw clearly again, and with the distinctness of terror he took note of each group. Right opposite him, at the oak table near the hearth, sat Isaac Dunch himself, in his great muddy boots and his worn buff coat, with his hat plucked over his scowling brows. His face was toward Gervase—the same red, lowering face that the boy remembered. It seemed that the very next second Dunch must take note of him, hesitating there upon the staircase. But Dunch was speaking to the man at his elbow, a lean-faced fellow with a big quill pen in his hand and some sheets of paper before him, who kept nodding assent to his leader's words. Just before

the table, but at a little distance, stood Sander Garford, in his shirt sleeves, as he was wont to go about the stable, with his hair awry and his head uncovered, and beside him were two of Dunch's dragoons, in their breastplates and steel caps. There were more dragoons at the great outer door of the hall and at the inner door to the passageway, where, over their shoulders, Gervase spied the white faces of the maids, who were peeping in as if there were some dreadful sight to see.

Indeed, Gervase began himself to feel that some dreadful thing was about to happen. The actual presence of the armed men and of the hostile Major took away all his courage. He would have scurried back to his chamber, but he could not control his shaking knees, and then, in the moment while he still clung helplessly to the balustrade, he heard a voice from the hall. "Gervase! Come here to me."

It was Henry's voice. Gervase had not taken notice of Henry among the lumbering and crowding Parliament men, but now, when he looked, he saw him standing quietly on the hearth before the black fireplace where the shadows were thick. There was an empty chair beside Dunch at the table, but Henry had risen, and was standing on

his hearth, and across the big hall his eyes met Gervase's eyes. "Come," he repeated.

Gervase went swiftly down the stairs. There was a dreadful stillness in the hall,—even Dunch had stopped grumbling,—and when he stepped off the last stair he found that all the faces were turned toward him. Among the people he distinguished only the Major, who was here to harm him, and Garford, whom he himself had harmed, and then he had run past them both and stood at Henry's side, with his hand in Henry's hand.

"This is the boy," Henry said, in the same unruffled voice in which he was wont to correct Gervase's Latin exercises.

Dunch flounced round in his chair. "Well, I see the brat," he answered, with a sort of snarl. "I've seen him before, too, Mr. Darrell, and there's little good I know of him, the young gypsy! Now let us hear this wondrous story he has contrived—I crave your pardon, sir. I do not, assuredly, believe for an instant that *he* contrived it."

There was no mistaking the meaning Dunch intended to convey. Gervase felt Henry's grip tighten on his hand, but Henry's voice was deadly quiet as he bade, "Tell the Major what you told me last night, Gervase. Tell him everything, remember."

It had been in Gervase's mind to refuse to do anything that would gratify Major Dunch, but Henry's bidding was a different matter. Once again he told the story of Jack Careless's escape, every word, though he found it far harder to tell now than when he was alone with Henry. He felt that every one in the hall was looking at him, and he saw Dunch scowl in a terrible fashion, and he saw the lean-faced man, at Dunch's elbow, writing, writing all the time, steal a sidewise glance at him. He pressed closer to Henry's side, and began to make pauses in his speech—pauses in which he could hear the old clock, as usual, ticking off the slow seconds.

The story was ended at last. Not daring to look up, Gervase waited with eyes on the sunlight that came through the eastern windows and checkered the dark floor with diamond patches. Nine of those patches he counted while he waited, and then he gave a nervous start, for he heard Dunch speak.

"The young runagate tells his tale well," snorted the Major. "Your story and his tally wonderfully, Mr. Darrell; ay, to be sure, they tally even as you swore they would. But do you dream, sir, that I'll believe, that any man in his right wits will believe,

that that slip of a boy devised and carried out alone so deep-laid a plot?"

Gervase understood nothing in that speech save that Dunch was despising him for a small boy who could not do a great deed. This contempt stung him to courage. He threw back his drooping head. "But I *did* do it, sir," he cried. "Jack told me —"

"Hold your tongue!" thundered Major Dunch.

Henry laid his hand on Gervase's lips. He was siding with the Major against him, Gervase thought rebelliously, but Henry's words reassured him. "If the boy is too young to have done what he confesses to," said Henry, icily, "he is surely too young for your bullying, Major Dunch. Pray say to me whatever is to say."

"I've naught to say," snapped Dunch. "What is to say were best said at Worcester town. This matter's not ended so lightly as you think, Henry Darrell. Once before I've shut my eyes to that little rascal's trespasses," — he puffed out his chest with a magnanimous air, — "but I've been generous and forbearing long enough. Now I'll do my duty to the Commonwealth. You and that young imp shall ride to Worcester with me, — ay, and so shall that impudent Jack of a groom." He bent his

frowning brows on Garford. "I've ever looked to see him make gallows fruit."

"That may be," Garford answered, with unabated cheerfulness; "but I do not rightly understand how ye're to hang young master and old master and myself all for one same offence."

"Be quiet, sirrah!" Henry checked Garford; but next moment he himself turned to Dunch. "My man has hit upon a truth," he said. "If you make me the scapegoat, if you arrest me for this misdemeanor, as you seem to purpose, in justice you cannot seize upon my servant also. You will release him —"

"No!" cried Dunch, triumphantly. "You're all confederate together, and you'll answer it, the gang of you, at Worcester." His unshaven lips set hard, and his eyes sparkled under his bent brows. He was enjoying that moment, was Major Dunch!

So palpable, so savage, was the Major's enjoyment that Gervase flinched before it and shrank back against Henry. Over in the doorway he heard a woman sobbing, and he guessed it was Bessie; but he could not look thither, for he dared not take his eyes from the Major. What would the Major have done to him at Worcester, he won-

dered; and in that terror of the unknown he clung tight to Henry, in whom was his only hope.

That hope was speedily taken from Gervase. Scarcely had the Major finished his threat when Henry spoke in his usual tone. "Simkin," he ordered, "bid saddle the horses, and briskly, too. I am at your service, Major Dunch, for Worcester, or wherever else you please."

At that, the last shred of Gervase's manful bearing went from him. "Oh, Henry!" he cried, and turned and flung his arms about his brother. "Will they hang us at Worcester?"

Henry's arm gripped him tight. "They will not hurt a hair of your head," he spoke in a deliberate voice that carried through the hall. "Have no fear, child. Major Dunch is able only to inflict on me a very pretty public disgrace in the progress he contemplates. When once we are at Worcester, there will be fair-minded men enough to see the truth of the matter."

"Are ye so sure?" snarled Dunch, stung by the studied contempt of the other's words. "Best think out a better story, then, against ye meet those fair-minded men. That child alone planned this fine scheme of treason? Never! Oh, no doubt he'd 'a' helped that runagate John Careless. If

'twere Careless had the horse, I'll believe the boy gave it him. Good faith, we all know you'd not lift a finger to save that man from perdition! The whole countryside knows the grudge you bear to him — him that cared for your father when you cast the old man out to beggary, like the canting Presbyterian that you are. But Careless is not the only malignant has been prowling in these parts the last days to whom a horse would come timely, — ay, he's not the only one! That spy Paulet was here, you do admit, but who was the man was with him? Look to yourself, Henry Darrell! There was one Charles Stuart fled from the Worcester fight. And your father served the king, we all know. There was a horse went astray, no doubt. But who had that horse, answer me that, you that would play fast and loose with both sides, — who had that horse?"

Henry's nostrils were drawn thin, and the pupils of his eyes were contracted to pin points. "I have told you twice that the horse was given to John Careless," he said.

"Careless, quotha?" Dunch smote the table with a great oath. "Truth, I'll believe that story when your Captain Careless himself comes to bear witness to it, when —"





“ Leaning against the doorjamb, mired, unkempt, white-faced,
stood Jack Careless.”

Gervase, standing with face pressed against his brother's arm, heard the Major draw a sharp breath, and for one tense instant felt the silence that filled the hall. Then he heard the crash of an overturned chair and the Major's voice crying aloud, "Name o' Heaven!"

Gervase looked up. The great outer door of the hall was open, and leaning against the door-jamb, mired, unkempt, white-faced, stood Jack Careless.

CHAPTER XXVII

FOR THE LAD'S SAKE

IN the blank silence that had fallen Jack walked slowly into the hall, clear up to the table, where he stood leaning against the back of the empty chair. "You asked for me, I think," he said, in a husky voice. "Well, here I am. *I'm* Careless. What do you seek of me?"

It was Dunch who first found tongue to answer. "Arrest that fellow!" he shouted.

Jack turned, though he still gripped the back of the chair, and surveyed the dragoons with a glancing smile. "Militiamen!" he wheezed. "A pack o' twopenny militiamen! Best keep away, my lads, till I lay off this tool. You may be hurt else." He began deliberately to unfasten the buckle of his baldric.

Gervase did not see Henry's face, had not heard Henry speak, but he was conscious that the instant Jack entered the hall Henry's hand had closed on his arm with a jealous grip. But now, at Jack's

movement of surrender, Gervase found the strength in his arm to wrench free from his brother and the strength in his legs to stumble across the hall. He knelt with one knee on the chair and he caught at Jack's hand, just as Jack flung across the chair the baldric that held his sword. "They'll hang you!" Gervase whispered, dry-eyed. He felt that Jack's hand was icy cold, and, looking up into Jack's face, he saw that a red spot flushed in either cheek, and there was an unusual brightness in Jack's gray eyes.

"Where's your comrade, that other rakehell, that gallows dog Paulet?" Dunch rumbled.

Though Gervase heard the Major speak, he did not turn to look at him, but still looked up at Jack, and he saw that Jack pressed his hand to his chest as he rasped out the answer. "He's where you'll not get him 'less you swim after him. He took ship; 'twas the night before last—two nights. I came back."

Then Gervase saw that Jack looked toward the fireplace and he, too, looked thither. In that instant he forgot that Dunch and the lean-faced secretary and the dragoons and the staring house-servants were present. They had no part, he felt, in what was going forward. There was only Henry, stand-

ing on the hearth, with his hands behind him, with his lips hard set, and his eyes the color of cold blue water, and there was Jack, leaning heavily on the chair, with the red vivid in his cheeks, and his eyes bright.

"For I came back," Jack rasped on, and though no word of address was uttered, Gervase knew that it was to Henry that Jack spoke. "Paulet, he's useful to the king. 'Twas different. But I— There was the horse—and the boy was fond of it. I was bringing it back. And then I heard—a country fellow on the highway told me—that the troopers had come to Southurst, so I came on. D'ye think I'd stand your debtor, Henry Darrell, after all that's been? And the lad, he is too little for me to hide behind. He was not to blame in the matter. But I knew you were of the stamp to beat him for't, so I— He did naught of himself, remember—"

"Oh, but I *did*!" whimpered Gervase.

"He did all as I bade him," Jack drowned his voice. "Faith, I—I frightened him into doing all."

Henry's face relaxed never so slightly into the grimmest of smiles. "It looks as if he were mightily afraid of you," he said, and turned to Major

Dunch. "You believe now, perhaps, the story we have told? You believe that Captain Careless had the horse in question, and that I was in no wise accessory to his escape?"

"You may stake your life he wasn't!" wheezed Jack, and then the hoarse effort at a sneer died out of his voice and he bent lower over Gervase. "You'll find Gallant tied here in the plantation. He'll be nimble as ever in a day or so —"

"Oh, *dear!*" wailed Gervase. "I didn't mean — The horse does not matter. 'Twas you! And you were safe, and now — and now —"

Gervase broke off, for outside on the flagged terrace he heard the ring of spurs and through the hall window he caught a glimpse of men in buff coats. The others in the hall, too, had heard and seen. There was creak of heavy boots and rustle of garments as all turned toward the great outer door. Gervase heard Henry's voice say "Thank Heaven!" but he saw nothing to be thankful for. He drooped against the chair, with his hands still clasping Jack's hand, and he did not look up till the clang of heavy boots and the ring of carabines grounded on the floor told him that more Round-head soldiers had tramped into the hall.

Gervase peeped up over the chair back, though

fearfully, and he saw a file of carabineers in stout buff coats, and halted just before them was Thomas Hutton's uncle, Colonel Denzil Hutton. Gervase stared at him with hopeless eyes, and then he glanced at Henry. Henry's face had lighted in the last minutes, but Gervase knew not whether Henry were for him or against him now.

Hutton's first words seemed to Gervase far from reassuring. "What is toward here?" he asked, in a sharp, authoritative voice, and Dunch answered at length. Why did Henry keep silent, wondered Gervase? For Colonel Hutton heard the story all from the Major, and then he said, in a voice that to Gervase seemed awful, "Corporal, your prisoner. Take him hence."

A burly corporal of carabineers had his hand on Jack's shoulder in an instant. Gervase cried out, an angry, frightened little cry, but Jack, reeling where he stood, smiled blandly at Dunch. "Under your favor, Major?" he questioned, and through all the hoarseness and pain of his speech the mockery could be felt. "I'd far liefer yield myself to soldiers than to militiamen. At your service, corporal."

They led him away, the Roundhead carabineers, and Gervase, white with the fear that they would hang Jack to the first tree, scrambled down from

the chair and ran blindly after them. But on the threshold the burly corporal took him by the breast of his doublet and shoved him back. "Run to thy mother, youngster," he bade. Then Jack and the carabineers tramped out, and the door was closed upon them.

Gervase went back across the hall, where the floor was reeling now before his eyes. The men were clustered round the table, loud in talk, with their blurred white faces close together. One—he realized that it was Henry—turned toward him and spoke his name.

"No, no!" cried Gervase. He snatched Jack's sword from the chair,—at least they should not touch that,—and he ran away up the stairs. The baldric flapped across his legs, and once the sword nearly tripped him, but at last he reached his chamber. He slammed the door behind him, and he flung himself down on the floor and hugged Jack's sword tight.

So he lay for long minutes till the sunlight on the floor had slipped up the wainscot and over the window ledge and the room was bright with the reflected glow of high noon. Once he heard the tramp of men coming slowly up the stairs, and he cringed at the sound, and then he heard the slam-

ming of doors and the hurry of feet, and again the corridor was quiet. A mouse scurried behind the wainscot, and the door of the black wardrobe creaked, and at last, after what seemed years of dread expectancy, he heard the latch rattle and heard Henry's startled voice. "Gervase, what has happened? Why are you lying here?"

Gervase scrambled to his knees and lifted his face, with the imprint of the sword-hilt red upon his cheek. "Have they — Oh, have they hanged him?" he faltered.

Henry looked first bewildered and then remorseful. He lifted Gervase to his feet, and when the boy stood upright, still kept his hands on his shoulders. "If you would but rid yourself of the notion that hanging is a necessary incident to warfare!" he said, and then explained carefully. "No one is to be hanged, as I have assured you more than once. Major Dunch and his men have ridden back to Worcester, and Colonel Hutton, as his superior, has taken upon himself the judging of this whole affair. You, as the chief mischief-maker, are too young for a military court, so you are left to my correction — and I think you've been punished enough already. Sander Garford is rubbing down the colonel's horse in the stable,

and your friend Careless is given into my custody."

Gervase asked for no reasons. In the new admiration for Henry that was growing on him he felt that doubtless if Henry said a thing must be so, Colonel Hutton and the rest of the Commonwealth hastened to do his will.

But Henry thought fit to explain further. "Captain Careless is very ill, you understand, Gervase, —too ill to be carried to a London prison. And he has done us both a service to-day. Maybe I have thought too hardly of him. At least he has been kind to you, after his own fashion; so for your sake he shall stay here."

Gervase laid his cheek against his brother's doublet. "You're very good," he whispered. "And may I see Jack?" He lifted his face, and what he saw in Henry's grave eyes made him catch his breath.

"Not now, Gervase," Henry repeated. "I told you he was ill. I've done what can be done to make him comfortable. By the grace of Heaven I shall cure him, but he has a fight for his life before him."

CHAPTER XXVIII

TWO MEN AND A BOY

TRUE enough, Jack Careless had a long and dubious fight for his life, and in a struggle such as Gervase had not reckoned among the ills likely to befall a soldier. It was no swashing sword cut nor gallant bullet wound that sapped Jack's strength, but a mere lung fever, the like of which any one might get by sleeping out of doors in drenched clothes. As it chanced, long-legged Jack Careless's most vulnerable point was his lungs. The fever, finding slight resistance at the outset, laid a strong grip upon him. The marvel was that he had ever mustered the strength to reach Southurst and to stand upright in the hall till he had said his say. Once outside the hall, in the custody of Hutton's troopers, he had collapsed utterly, with only one last flicker of energy in which he had sworn that he would die in a ditch rather than be carried into Henry Darrell's house. His wishes, as the corporal of the squad reminded him, had nothing

to do with the matter. He was carried into the house and put to bed, and there he lay through days of fever and delirium.

It was Henry Darrell who tended Jack, and tended him rather more carefully than if he were a brother. The very fact that Henry had not the slightest shadow of affection for the sick man made him labor the more conscientiously to save him. He owed Jack a long score, and he took grim satisfaction in thus wiping it out at last. Day and night he worked over Jack, with all the resources that his training as a physician gave him, and the more he wearied himself in the effort, the better he liked it.

Meantime Gervase lived his life much as usual, though, for Jack's sake, he was by spells elaborately quiet when he was in the house. But out of doors he hunted for walnuts, and played with the dogs, and took long rides on the recovered Gallant. Garford rode with him, but Garford, after the scrape into which his wooing had got him, no longer turned their course toward the Widow Profit's farm, though Gervase, who remembered the Banbury cake and the ever delightful brook, begged to be taken there again. As a consolation Garford told him a mighty secret, namely, that

he meant to marry the widow at Christmastide, but Gervase did not see how that bettered matters for him. He preferred to hear Garford set forth in apt phrases the bewilderment and confusion of Major Dunch, when Colonel Hutton took his brother-in-law's tangled affair into his own hands and sent the militiaman packing. Listening to such tales, Gervase grew bold himself and bragged that on that famous morning of the inquiry he had not been afraid — not he! But none the less no persuasion could ever coax him within less than two rods of the hedge round Major Dunch's park.

When Gervase thought of Jack Careless — and indeed he thought of him often — it was only with satisfaction. He was glad to feel that Jack was once more beneath the same roof with him, and he supposed that now he and Jack and Henry would live peacefully together all their days. No doubt Jack and Henry would be great friends henceforth, and so everything would come right at last. It never entered Gervase's head that Jack might never get well again. Henry had said that he would cure him, and Gervase had great faith now in Henry's promises. Even on the nights when Henry watched in the sickroom till sunrise, Gervase had no fear, and it was only what he had looked forward to when

he was told that Jack was mending and when at last he was permitted to speak with him.

Jack was well on the way to recovery, else Henry had never suffered so erratic a creature as his small brother to disturb him, but to Gervase he looked alarmingly ill. His face was as white as the pillow, and his eyes were big, and his hair was cut close. So like a stranger did he seem that Gervase grew shy. "I'm glad you're better, Jack," was all that he could murmur at first.

But presently Gervase realized that, though Jack was oddly silent and seemed to desire nothing save to lie and watch him, he was still the same Jack. So Gervase shoved a chair up to the bedside and sat down upon it, with his legs dangling, and entered into conversation. "Did Henry make you cut your hair too, Jack?" he asked resignedly. "He made *me*, first thing."

"No doubt," muttered Jack. "He's a rare hand at having matters his own way."

For Jack, most regrettably, made but a resentful and troublesome invalid. Sickness was a new experience to him. He did not like it and would not endure it, and he was up and staggering about the house long before Henry advised such rashness. All through the autumn months he lounged about

the hall, half sick, half well, and petted the dogs, and tried to teach Gervase to play chess. And three times a day Jack and Henry, with Gervase, the bone of contention, between them, sat at table together. They were very civil in their bearing. The last weeks had taught them to respect each other, but they did not go beyond respect.

Yet Henry did not check Gervase, either by word or deed, when the boy sought Jack Careless, and Jack went even further. One day when he and Gervase were pacing the paths of the garden between the withered flower stalks, he spoke out with some embarrassment. "Look you here, Gervase," he said. "I've been thinking on old matters, and—and I doubt if your brother bore himself toward your father quite as churlishly as I held and as I taught you."

Gervase, who had entirely forgotten that old charge, looked blank, but Jack did not heed him. "After all," he went on, "a man may be a Roundhead and yet be a gentleman, even as your brother is. Though, to be sure, it's better to be a gentleman and serve the king."

"Yes," answered Gervase, but half comprehending. "I like my Brother Henry a deal now."

Jack looked at him wistfully and made as if to

speak, but he bit back the words. "Well, he saved my life, I do admit it," he said rather grudgingly.

That was all. Henry and Jack never fell upon each other's necks in a burst of affection. Gervase, just slipping from his long-continued childhood into boyhood, realized dimly that it could not be otherwise. Jack and Henry, good and true men both, were as far apart in their goodness as the two poles. They could no more mingle in friendliness than oil and water could mingle.

So they did not all live happily together ever after, as Gervase, in his childishness, had fancied they would live. Instead, spite of their scrupulous civility, both men seemed relieved when the order for Jack's disposal came from London. All those autumn months Henry had been writing to this man and to that in places of authority, and he had succeeded at last in saving Jack from any heavy penalty. Of a truth, time had a little softened the rancor of the victorious Parliamentarians. Many of the lesser prisoners, destined at first to no milder punishment than slavery in the Guinea mines, had been suffered to slip away to their homes, and those in authority did not feel the need of using too great rigor toward a single poor captain of horse. Paulet was safe, and much as the Parliamentarians

would have liked to hang that clever spy, it was small satisfaction, at this late hour, to hang his companion. Accordingly John Careless, late captain in the army of Charles Stuart, was given a month in which to convey himself outside of the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth, with the understanding that, if he ventured to return to England, he should meet with summary punishment.

So much Henry told Careless. He said nothing of the fact that there was also a pretty ransom penny to pay, and that he himself had paid it. For a year afterward there were certain economies practised at Southurst, which fretted Gervase, who, until he was much older, never guessed what made them necessary.

At the time Gervase knew only that Jack was going from England, and he grieved honestly. The last hours he dogged Jack up and down the stairs, and helped pack his cloak-bag, and begged leave to polish his spurs. Once more Jack was his hero, his beautiful, martial hero, whom he forgave even for the folly of having so unwarrior-like a misfortune as an attack of lung fever.

But the dreaded last day came, and the hero said farewell to Southurst,—men and maids and dogs and all. He was to ride to Bristol, where

he would take ship for France, and, to Gervase's delight, Henry said they would bear him company for a little distance on the road. So Jack and Henry and Gervase rode forth of a gray November afternoon, and headed southward toward the sea. The road was narrow, and for the most part stony. The riders went at a slow pace, and so had opportunity for talk.

"Write to me, Gervase, under cover to Sir Charles Jervison at Beauvais," Jack said once, and then bethought himself and added, "If your brother will suffer you to write."

Henry bowed his head, but Gervase piped up loyally, "He let me. Once already I wrote," — he stammered helplessly as he saw the difficulties before him, — "but the letter — it — it miscarried."

After that Gervase, of the three riders, kept silent. He wondered if Henry realized what he had confessed, and he wondered if Henry remembered that bad-tempered letter, and he felt ashamed. But Henry did not appear to guess the meaning of what Gervase had said. He was talking with Jack Careless, quite impersonally, of the nature of the soil of Worcestershire, and Jack looked bewildered and uncomfortable as he usually did when Henry talked to him.

It was a relief to all three, perhaps, when they reached the spot, at the edge of a bare, stony hill, where Jack was to go on alone to his inn. They drew rein on the brow of the hill, and then Jack found tongue. He held out his hand. "You're a good fellow, Darrell," he said. "And I'm plaguily grateful to you, though you doubt it. And—and I'm not sorry now that you have the boy. He's better with you, I can see't. Ferdinando Paulet said he needed disciplining, and for once Ferdinando spoke the truth, and I knew it. But you take more naturally to disciplining folk than I do," Jack blundered on, "so it's better you have him. But when he's older you shall give him back to me, and he shall be cornet in my troop, eh, Gervase?"

Gervase bit down on his lip and nodded. Now that the moment of parting had come, he dared not trust his voice.

Henry shook Jack's hand. "When the boy is older, he shall decide for himself," he promised slowly.

He wished Jack a God-speed, and Jack hugged Gervase, and so rode away. Gervase saw his figure all a-blur, and watched till it passed out of sight. Then he turned Gallant's head and rode home in silence at Henry's side.

The air was raw with coming snow and the night closed in early. The candlelight that streamed from the windows at Southurst had never seemed to Gervase so cheery, nor the great fire on the hearth so warm and comforting. It was home, his home. When supper was done, he fetched a book, not the Cato book nor the Psalms, but the wonderful big book about Virginia, with the pictures, which he had found long before in his brother's closet and now had mustered courage to beg. Henry was reading at the table by the great fire in the hall, and Gervase went to him, instead of slipping away to the kitchen, as he had been wont to do. He drew up a low stool and sat closer to Henry than usual, because he missed Jack. The book was big, so in the end he adjusted it against Henry's knee, and he bent over it and turned the pages in steady silence.

He thought that Henry, too, was reading busily, so he started in surprise when he felt Henry's hand laid upon his head. "Look at me, Gervase," Henry's voice spoke abruptly and with a note in it that Gervase could not understand.

The boy glanced up in shy wonder, and he saw that Henry had tossed down his book on

the table at his elbow and was leaning a little toward him.

"I have been thinking," Henry went on in his curt fashion. "Gervase,"—he hesitated even then as if he scarcely dared ask the question—"Gervase, are you sorry that I did not let you go away to-day with Captain Careless?"

Gervase smiled slowly, and, looking down at his book, leaned a little harder against his brother's knee. "No, Brother Henry," he said. "I'd as lief stay with you."

.

.

THE MAKING OF CHRISTOPHER FERRINGHAM

BY

BEULAH MARIE DIX

Author of "Hugh Guyeth," "Soldier Rigdale," etc.

Cloth. 12mo. \$1.50

"It bids fair to be widely enjoyed for its remarkable vividness, the sweep of its narrative, and its surprising variety of interest. It is somewhat unlike other recent historical romances. The narrative is never for a moment interrupted for the sake of local color. . . . Yet, in few, if any, recent historical narratives have we had so vivid and memorable or so realistic a picture of the daily life of a given community in a past age. It may fairly be questioned if there can be found anywhere else in literature so well rounded, so persuasive, and so forcible a portrayal of a typical Puritan community as that which we have in the first half of this book." — *The Boston Herald*.

"In brilliancy, exciting interest, and verisimilitude, 'The Making of Christopher Ferringham' is one of the best of the semi-historical novels of the day, the rival of 'Richard Carvel' and 'To Have and to Hold,' and not unworthy of comparison with Maurice Hewlett's best." — *The Boston Advertiser*.

"This vigorous and compact tale bristles with stirring adventure by land and sea: it is graphic; its flights and sea-faring ventures are portrayed with no uncertain hand, and yet the simple love story which threads the harsher incidents into natural sequences is told with a winning sweetness." — *Chicago Record*.

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

66 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

HUGH GWYETH, *A ROUNDHEAD CAVALIER.*

BY

BEULAH MARIE DIX,

Author of "Soldier Rigdale."

12mo. Cloth. \$1.50.

That the first work of an unknown young author should reach a third edition in three weeks of publication confirms the opinion of the critics who call it—

"Well written and stirring." — *The Press*, Philadelphia.

"The story is valuable. . . . One is continually impressed by the commendable purity of the work, and the tonic and bracing quality of its atmosphere." — *Literature*.

"Engrossingly interesting." — *Boston Courier*.

"We found it difficult to tear ourselves away from the fascinating narrative. Even Mr. Anthony Hope does not inspire more joyfully the exhilaration of battle, with all the 'swarmings, marches, and thick hubbubs of souldiers,' or maintain more uniformly the excitement of a reader. . . . Miss Dix has exquisite subtlety in her construction, a delicate reticence in her selection of incidents, and unusual power as well as consistency in her creation of live characters. We shall be vastly surprised if she does not carve for herself a prominent place in the ranks of romance." — *Saturday Review*, London.

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY,

66 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.



This book should be returned to
the Library on or before the last date
stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred
by retaining it beyond the specified
time.

Please return promptly.

BOOK DUE-WID

JAN 28 1978

5820552

228

CANCELLED

BOOK DUE-WID

6057780

APR 12 1978

